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THE
BURGOMASTER OF BERLIN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.
1843.



THE

BURGOMASTER OF BERLIN.

CHAPTER I.

A MANY days now passed over Berlin, on which it rained and snowed, and the moisture left by the snow and rain was dried up by the wind; and many as were the rain-drops and flakes of snow which descended from the clouds, not fewer were the words whispered in the kitchens and spinning-rooms, and out of doors too, by master and workman, who, whilst hammering and filing away, lost no opportunity of speaking their minds about the town and the common weal. Now, if all the drops that fall from a black rain-cloud were to light upon one spot, it is likely that the ground would be washed away, and the houses on it undermined. The rain-drops fall separately, and the runnels of water take different ways—one going

here, and another there. It is thus with words when there is much talking.

To hear the noise and the threatening language in the workrooms, the shops, and cellars, one would have thought that the senate could not exist another day. "They ought to be driven out, and stoned," said one—"Their houses should be burnt about their ears," said another. But the more violent the storm is, the sooner it expends its strength, just as, on the other hand, still waters are the deepest. A back chamber or two, and a dark corner in this or that cellar—these were the places in which the most was said and determined on—determined on, too, by parties speaking half low down, with their heads at the same time very near together.

Whilst the tradesfolks were meeting together, and grumbling, there was not less going on amongst the higher classes. At every dinner, at every supper, some pointed and disagreeable allusion to the senate, was sure to be made; and yet the talk was to further a feeling of union amongst that body. But they who met as friends, were sure to part foes, and every one spoke ill of his neighbour behind his back.

This is to be ascertained from the chronicles; but many things happen of which the chronicles say nothing, and often, that which is as the spark

to the tinder, is not written in them at all. It is so ever in the world ; that which has a great issue, begins often with something so small, that people do not notice it. Inquiry into first causes is generally made too late ; the witnesses are dead and gone. Great events overshadow their trifling causes ; when a house is on fire, it is too late to cast an eye to the fireplace, or seek to remove the few sparks which first got outside the stove.

The day we have written about was an important one for Berlin ; but, believe it or not, there is not a word about it in the chronicles, save that Red Hannah was branded, and Salome flogged, at the Spandow-gate ; not a word about the burgomaster's interview with Bartholomew Schumm, nor of the bargain he made for the scores of groschens with which he was to pay Henning Mollner ; not a word about his way home leading him through the open place near the bridge, and bringing him into collision with the maskers. Something there should have been entered in their books about this, only the senate forbade it, for reasons which we shall learn hereafter. For the same reason, there is nothing about the fight before the barber's booth, or how Pawel Strobant got a blow from a stone which laid him up many weeks ; nor is there any mention of the strangers who were on the barber's roof, though every child knew shortly after who

they were. In the chronicles, however, stands not a word, for which also there may have been a reason; nor is there anything about the banquet at Thomas Wyns', though it was there that the ill-feeling against the Rathenows blazed out; nor a word about the burgomaster's daughter's quarrel with Eva Schumm, which was occasioned by Herr Dietrich Wyns' taking one for the other, and making amends to neither; a thing very wrong, though there was this excuse for it, that the sweet wine had circulated very freely.

Wise folks say, that history, ever since the creation of the world, has taken notice of nothingnesses, and kept no record of things of real importance. In Berlin, at all events, it must have been so; for where do we find anything about its being first built and made into a town, or indeed anything which an inquirer into the cause of its many troubles would first seek to get to know of? But had the good masters let everything be put down as it really happened, what nice things their descendants would have had to read—particularly about days like these! For where were the noble patricians to be found the morning after, they who had been so merry and comfortable at Thomas Wyns'; how sickly and pale-faced they all looked, unable to stir out of bed, calling their wives to cook them pottage from the camomile which

grows in the fields ; how many, too, had to have veins breathed ; how many, indeed, were not in bed at all, but where no senator had ever a right to be. Had all this been written in the chronicles, what might not the mockers say about the then morality of the towns, which morality, notwithstanding, was much thought of. Still, a good citizen had a right to match himself against another, let him come from where he might, in a matter of fair drinking, and the townsmen could generally carry the most wine.

The session of the senate the next morning presented a miserable spectacle ; and how many were missing ! The good ladies had really too much to do ; such running about, and paying visits, and whispering in the corners over the stoves, and talking even all the way down stairs ! Many a show of astonishment and counterfeit of disgust they made, as one told another how such an one had been brought home, where he had been found, and how witnesses could testify to the truth of all about it.

And few women there were, on either side the Spree, who had not something to say against Elizabeth Rathenow, her pride and conceit ; and few amongst the men who hadn't something to say against her father Johannes. Everything was brought up again about the quarrel which the

towns had with the Rathenows ; even their friends could say nothing, for it soon spread from the barber's shop that the illness which the burgomaster had pleaded as an excuse for his absence from Thomas Wyns' was a trifling matter. Everybody was of opinion that Herr Wyns was insulted, and could not pass it over ; there was also a talk, that the burgomaster had sent a confidential servant to knock the next morning at Herr Bartholomew Schumm's house in Friars' Street, and that the worthy senator himself, with his nightcap on, had poked his head through the window, and shouted, " Bartholomew Schumm is not at home to the Rathenows, or any of their beggarly pack !" and had then banged the window down with much noise. Neighbours had both seen it and heard it ; and though some were of opinion that the wine was still in Herr Bartholomew's head, yet others, and the most, thought otherwise, and rejoiced at it. It caused so much talk, that at the early meeting of the senate, the secretary and syndicus had all the work to do themselves. The senators paid so little attention, that they had to be applied to by name, to give their votes. They were the same people who were usually so loud, and scarcely would let each other be heard ; now, however, each was busy gossiping with his neighbour. The people might have talked in the open streets about pulling down

the senate, there could never have been a better opportunity. Kurprince Frederick the Other sent a functionary that very morning to the senate of both towns; he wished to know what it was that caused so much disturbance between the towns, for there were rumours in the land which no one could make anything of. They were therefore required to make answer, the aldermen and burgomaster, to the lord of the land, as was right and proper. But his gracious highness might have waited a long time, had he not known from other sources how things stood; for the senators bid the writing lie on the table, and the answer they made through their secretary was one which might have been read to mean one thing or another, as any one chose to understand it.

Documents of a very different character were, however, exchanged between the senate and the burgomaster, for the latter did not attend the session. His reason the first time was, that he was still unwell; but the next, that they had written to him in an unbecoming manner. What he wrote back irritated the senate exceedingly. These were different letters to the one to the Kurprince; every word had its meaning, and a child might have read plainly what that meaning was. And there was still more of hidden meaning underneath, for such as chose to perceive it; and

as writing in those days was a somewhat laborious occupation, they availed themselves also of messages by word of mouth, and they said such pointed things to one another, that the bearer, to whom the messages were confided, had sometimes scarcely courage to deliver them.

It was, however, sometime before it came to this, and it happened after what we are about to relate; but there were so many troubles that one hardly knows where to begin or where to end.

Any one seeing Henning Mollner issuing from the burgomaster's house the morning after the banquet would scarcely have recognised him. There was a glow upon his forehead, and his eyes were sparkling with delight; but clear as his eyes appeared to be, he could only see straight before him—he could not see those who were within a yard of him, recognised him, though he thought himself concealed by his cloak.

But a good deal had happened in the house at an earlier hour, and though it be not well to write down much about the deceptions of dreams, in which disconnected pictures haunt the brain, yet it is necessary that we describe what took place, in order that what follows may be intelligible.

It is but seldom that the painter can arrive at portraying the expression of a face, for it comes, and goes, no one knows how; nor is it easy

either to paint the like in words. Our ancestors never did it; paper was dear then, and all that was written had a seal put to it, to signify that it was true, witnesses being called to swear to it. But in our days, when paper is cheap, and one doesn't put a seal to everything, a good deal gets written which a man cannot swear to.

Poor Mistress Elizabeth could not close an eye the whole night through; when she attempted, it was but to see frightful visions. More than once her father seemed to enter the door, and coming to her bedside, shake her, asking for the chain. At such times, she would hide her head under the bed-clothes till half suffocated, her teeth chattering as with cold. At last she could bear it no longer; she sprang up, put on some clothes hastily, and prostrated herself before a statue of the Virgin, which stood in a niche. Most fervently she prayed, that the holy Maria would look down upon her, would see her bitter sorrow, and—get her her chain back. No, she did not venture to pray in those words—how could the holy Mother of God be expected to trouble herself about a piece of vain finery? She prayed rather for forgiveness that she should even have had a thought of doing so. But she did pray that she would graciously attend on Henning Mollner, and give light to his eyes that he might not go wrong. Yes,

yes, she should assist Henning, dear, good Henning ; he was deserving of her motherly protection, his heart was so good, though he might be perhaps a little wild and hasty ; and though he was only a weaver's son, yet many a person of quality might wish for a son like him. And she continued in his praise, and clasped her hands so closely that the virgin might well believe her, she prayed so earnestly ; and as Elizabeth lifted her eyes, the Queen of heaven seemed to smile in a way that startled her. Perhaps she had asked for too much, or said too much in his favour—more, at any rate, than she would have liked her father or any one else to have heard. But then, if the Virgin was to assist Henning, it was as well that she should know the best of him ; and even if she made out too good a case, a little deceit might well be excused, as her object was to prevent her father's loss.

Oh, what a long night it was ! The cocks would not begin to crow ; the cats on the roof were caterwauling horribly — it sounded as if Eva Schumm was laughing at her with a hundred voices, and then as if she seized her, getting hold of her by the breast, and shaking her. Elizabeth had no power now to shake the little poisonous thing off, as she had done in the evening. Was it a consciousness of wrong ? But it was not her

laughing at her father which had made Eva attack her ; it was an ebullition of long-concealed vexation, because she was not the handsomest, as Elizabeth was—because Herr Dietrich Wyns had not meant her, but Elizabeth — because she had been left standing, every one laughing at her—yes, that was why Eva had sprung upon her like a cat. A feeling of pride came over Elizabeth ; again she held herself an inch higher, though it was night and there were none to see her. “I was the most beautiful,” she whispered, half aloud. At that moment, the lamp which was under the picture of the Virgin burnt high, drawn up perhaps by a draught of air, and she caught the face of the holy Maria. Was it serious, or angry, or what was it ? It went to her very marrow, and she threw herself on her knees, and embraced the statue with her arms, sinking her head to the very ground.

A loud and repeated ringing brought her to herself ; it was so furious, that the small pictures trembled upon the wall. It seemed to her at first to be an alarm of fire ; but as she stood a moment motionless, the door opened, and the old nurse’s voice was heard to say, “What sort of a child are you, to delay when your father is dying ?”

“My father dying !” The bad spirits were now indeed put to flight. Elizabeth rushed down the

stairs after the nurse, who was already in the chamber. The whole house was awake, and the servants running to and fro. Johannes Rathenow stood in his room leaning against a table. He was half dressed, and in his fur gown; one might see that he had not been in bed. His face was pale and distorted, and it was evident that he was recovering his recollection, just as if awaking from some dream, and looking round to assure himself that he was awake. "It is gone, my child," he said to Elizabeth, who had thrown herself at his feet, lifting her up at the same time, and pressing her to him. "It is nothing, my child—peace, peace—they are gone!" She made a sign to the servants to leave them and make no noise. He threw himself back in his arm-chair, Elizabeth sat on a footstool at his feet, and her old aunt leaned herself over the chair-back.

"His breathing is free again, God be praised!" said Elizabeth.

The burgomaster stroked his daughter's forehead; his eyes became clearer, and his forehead more smooth, as he read the tender anxiety for him in her lovely features.

"I have you left yet," he said; "you will not leave me."

"Never, father! Dear father, what are you

thinking about ? You must have had a dreadful dream."

" Was it a dream ?" The old man again looked all around him. " Then it was a bad dream, Elizabeth ! They all deserted me, every one left me ; they died and pined away like dry branches ; the wind had broken them, and I remained alone."

" You shall not, you never shall remain alone !" said Elizabeth, coaxingly.

" We are all great sinners in the presence of Him who entered sinless into heaven ; but what have I then done worse than others ?"

" Oh, you are the best father, the best Christian !" interrupted the daughter, " and no one in this town goes to the confessional with a clearer conscience than you do."

An ironical smile played round aunt Gertrude's lips, but she did not speak.

" Yes, clear ; so much I can say, clear from wicked intention, clear from sinful thoughts and resolutions." Thus saying, the burgomaster arose, and paced up and down the room. " I will give a full account to any and every person who may require it."

" To bad spirits, too ?" murmured the nurse.

" I have lived for the sake of the town ; I have done what in me lay to keep up discipline and

maintain good manners ; it has cost me sacrifices."

"Blood of thy blood !" spoke out the old lady, not now restraining her voice.

"Blood of my blood !" repeated the burgo-master, and he fixed an earnest, open eye upon her ; there was no anger in his look. "Honour and praise, therefore, to my father Matheus ; and if the awful hour should come, which thou, dear father, experiencedst, nor shrankst from, thy son Johannes, I trust in God, will not shrink from it, but be steadfast, and speak as thou didst."

"Holy St. Nicholas, hear him not ! Hear him not, holy St. Peter ! He would bring his own child to the scaffold !" groaned out the old woman.

"For the love of Jesus, father, tell me what has happened ? Why do you speak so cruelly ? Oh, it was only a dream ! See, everything stands just as it was, there has nothing happened."

"Nothing ?" he asked, looking so fixedly at the girl that she dropped her eyes, thinking that of a certainty he knew about the chain ; but his thoughts were elsewhere.

"They were all very friendly," continued Elizabeth, "and spoke to me, and asked me particularly all about you."

"And did you hear what they said behind your

back? Ah, poor child! how willingly would I leave you your pleasures, nor bid you know the world's wickedness; but it is not to be so. They asked my father Matheus why he never laughed. Who can laugh when he sees that the world's justice itself is vexation? I cannot laugh, and it vexes them. I am as a thorn in their sides. They say I should moderate myself; that it is not prudent to tell fools and villains that they are villains. They sent me word yesterday, some of them, I should not mix myself with what I am not wanted in; I should remember what excitement it causes, and shut my eyes to it. Why did they elect me burgomaster?—to sleep or to wake? As long as I am burgomaster, I will keep my eyes on all."

He was much excited, and he trod through the chamber in a way almost to frighten the females.

"Dear father, they will find out how good you are, and how just."

"They refuse to share the disgrace which the people put upon me," he continued; "but I will meet them face to face, and speak a good German word to them. They want me out of the senate, because my counsel sounds harsh; but the Rathenows were ever born senators, and the name cannot be cut out of the senate without its falling to pieces like a scutcheon which is broken over a grave."

As he got more and more excited, the two made signs to each other to do what they could to calm him, for they knew his way. It was always a bad sign when he spoke in anger. Gertrude handed him a cooling draught, and Elizabeth, with gentle flatteries, hung herself on his arm; she told him that "the senate-house was on the Long Bridge, and that there the gentlemen sat with their beards and chains, but that they were then in her dear father's house, where father and daughter might talk like friends."

The sound of her voice, and what she said, had the effect of brightening up his face, and the bad spirits seemed to leave him; but still his eye wandered all round, and he wished to have more candles lighted, that he might be convinced that what his daughter said was true.

As soon as there was more light, he seemed relieved, and put his hand on his daughter's head.

"It was only a dream, God be praised! They sat there all round the walls in judgment, and I stood before them, and was obliged to answer—I who was just, to them who were unjust. Who were the judges?" he continued, as if in thought. "I did not know them. And yet I should know them. They sat upon high leathern-cushioned chairs round the green table, and required me to abdicate my office. As a traveller strips him of

his clothes when a band of robbers would have them, so I was made to give up one thing after another ; and as I did so, each time the tall man at the table said, 'It is the law,' and they all nodded." The burgomaster put his hand to his forehead. "The law? who can take my house, my farms, my fields from me by law? I lifted my hand, and swore by God and his saints that they were mine! Who swore the contrary? No one could. But the court—it was under the light of heaven; the flags bearing the eagles waving in the air, the heralds proclaiming, and nobles and princes sitting round. The people said 'Amen,' and gave thanks with one consent for the just sentence." He sank back exhausted.

"You were poorly, and perhaps you didn't pray before you betook you to your bed," remarked Elizabeth; "and Father Cyriak says that bad spirits have power then, and that they send bad thoughts to lead us into temptation."

"Temptation!" said the old man, meditatively, drawing his hand across his forehead. "'Thinkst thou that what thou hast will endure for ever? the stars are alone eternal,' said the judge. 'But my right, Herr, my right is eternal.' Then he laid his hand on my shoulder, and I became dust."

The crowing of the cock announced the advent of morning; the sound brought a shudder over

the old man's frame. "Lead me to my bed, my child; I will try to gain the sleep which the dream robbed me of. And should he come again," and he drew himself up as if once more in contact with unearthly spirits, "I will answer him."

"God alone is eternal," put in the nurse; "and our sinfulness, which he took from us who died for our sakes the sinner's death."

"Amen!" said the burgomaster.

"Nothing else is eternal, Johannes."

There was a long pause. The old man was gathering his recollections; he was seeking for pleasant thoughts, but the melancholy ones seemed ever uppermost; the dark spirits would not give ground. The two females sat anxious and silent, whilst the sick man's talk continued wandering as before. At last he raised himself up suddenly, and cried out, stretching his arms out imploringly—

"The chain is mine, noble sir! Take everything—only not the chain! The town!—what shall I say if the town demands the chain? The Emperor Charles—the great emperor! Herr, it is not right; one prince does not take what another gave!"

They awoke him, and he wiped the perspiration from his forehead, again gazing anxiously all round him, and feeling all over his breast. He then

called out they should give him his chain. Gertrude went to the ebony chest, and brought him the heavy golden chain with the arms of the town. He held it up, and let its links play through his fingers.

"This chain belongs to the town ; it gave it me, and can claim it again. Its right never dies ; and should a burgomaster be laid every year with his fathers, the burgomaster never dies. But give me my own chain, Elizabeth."

Elizabeth and her aunt looked at one another.

"*It* is mine," continued her father, looking wildly round him. "Kings and princes—no, nor the emperor, nor the states, can take *it* from me ; and it was a foolish, ridiculous dream, that I had to give it up, too. For, is there a court in Christendom who could take from me what is my own ? The chain, Elizabeth ; when I see it and feel it with my hands—oh, I shall be all right and well again !—indeed I shall, dear child !"

Elizabeth dropped her eyes. She cast an anxious look at her aunt. Frau Gertrude took the word.

"Oh, Johannes ! hardly restored to health as you are, by the mercy of God and the help of the saints, and you crave again after vain ornament ! It was because your thoughts were dwelling on gold when you laid you down, that bad spirits had

power over you, and sent you sinful dreams. Drive such thoughts from your mind, and lay you down with pious prayer and supplication."

"I seek not vain ornament," said Herr Johannes; "I ask but for what is mine; that is no wicked wish in the eyes of the Lord and his saints. I would but look upon what is mine; I would but feel it in my hands. It is my right; it is not for that which is just that one is doomed, but for that which is unjust."

"And can you take your courts and your houses, and the chain that was yours, when you go to sleep with your fathers? They must stay behind; and will it trouble you whether they change hands or not, just as their possessor wills it? or thy rights, Johannes, granted though they be by emperors and the states, with seals hung on ribbons, and with bulls of cedar-wood, will you take them with you to shew at Heaven's gate, that they may let you in? He at the gate would say to you, 'Those are earthly rights, they are of no use here: here there is another right, and the spell that opens the door is mercy.' Let the chain rest where it is, Johannes; it is but links of worthless gold, and every link binds you closer to the world, which you will have to leave."

"At the Lord's bidding—he who said, 'So far shalt thou go, and no farther,' " answered the bur-

gomaster; "but till he utters that word, I am master over what is my own—my chain, Elizabeth!"

Elizabeth stood up, trembling; and the answer which she stammered was, "Oh! dear father, if you had seen how they looked at the chain!—they said it dazzled their eyes——"

"It dazzled the eyes of thy great-grandmother, too," said her father: "the Emperor Charles bore it round his neck. The saying is, that the emperor allowed himself to do more than he had a right to do; his manners were foreign; my great-grandmother reproved him as a virtuous woman should; and it so happened, that she tore the chain from his neck. Nor did she tremble when the emperor shouted, angrily, 'Woman, thou hast laid false hand on imperial right!' 'It is my right!' she answered, resolutely; 'it is woman's right!' The emperor laughed, as she stood there heated and enraged, the chain still in her hand, and he said, 'Well, then, as it is thy right, take it, and keep it as a memento of the courageous citizen's wife who defended her right against an emperor. Let it be, and remain, an heir-loom in thy family.' And it has been so. Give me the chain, that I may lock it up."

"Yes, father—to-morrow, when it is daylight. The stones are clouded over with the smoke of the

torches ; I will dust them and rub them, that they may be bright again."

"The chain, Elizabeth !" said her father ; and the nurse winked to her to go, lest the suspicion which the sick man seemed beginning to cherish might be confirmed by her confusion, and, indeed, lest her father's anger might drive the girl to a falsehood.

"You stood before the judgment-seat, Johannes. Oh, you rightful man ! you who are wont to judge, now before the judgment yourself ; and they found you guilty, despite of all your rightfulness ; and yet you would have the golden necklace ! What do you want with the chain ? To lock your right up that no man may steal it ? It was not the gold which your grandmother sought after. God gave her strength ; but it is the glitter that you seek after. It was to be an heir-loom in the family. Do you know what it is an heir-loom of ? Pride, and loftiness, and self-confidence. You are proud that your ancestor was virtuous ; the virtue is not the inheritance of your house, but only pride because of her virtue. It grows and increases, and feeds envy and hatred. You hung it round your daughter's neck that it might shine and glitter, and that the people might ask, 'How did the Rathenows get such a splendid chain ?' Does that please you, Johannes ? Have you seen their

looks and heard their whisperings ? You would that she be lofty too, but the grave that you are digging is a deep one. Rejoice, Johannes, even though the chain were lost !”

Just as they who live in a miller's house hear nothing of the millwheel, so in the burgomaster's house the croaking voice of the old aunt Gertrude was unheard by all. But the last word was enough to restore the fading senses of the old man.

“ Lost !” he cried, springing up—“ the chain lost !”

Gertrude saw the swollen veins of his forehead. She put herself in his way, and opened her arms as if to detain him ; then she sank down and caught hold of his gown.

“ Johannes, pray and give thanks that it is lost. Holy Virgin ! what is a necklace and what a daughter ?”

“ Lost !” repeated the burgomaster, directing a searching look towards his relative. “ Mad wife, thou liest ; the chain is not lost ; it is the last I have ! It is not lost, I say !”

There was that in Herr Johannes' tone which frightened even the old woman.

“ In God's name, Johannes, you are sick ; you have house, and home, and horse, and carriage, and farm ; you are alderman of a rich town, and have friends who will stand by you !”

“They all desert me!” he cried; and tearing himself loose from her, he made a rush towards the door; but before opening it, he stood a moment still, as one might do before a last door which shuts something from us which we would willingly not see. He was as pale as a corpse. The first grey light of the morning was breaking through the small round window-panes; the cocks were crowing, and the yard-dogs barking. He put his hand to the handle, but suddenly drew it back again, for his ear caught a sound outside which he was far from expecting.

CHAPTER II.

THE tones outside were of an exactly different description to those which we have heard within. There was a sound as of laughing and crying, but crying for joy, and it seemed to get louder.

On opening the door, a sight met his eye, as unexpected as the sound which had met his ear ; nothing but cheerful and astonished faces. The servants had brought lights, and the narrow hall was lit up ; and there, in the middle, stood his daughter Elizabeth, and young Henning Mollner, close by her side ; one might have supposed they were embracing each other. It would have been difficult to say which of the two looked the most pleased ; and if it be true that joy gives a more pleasing expression to the face than any painter can portray, there can be no reflection more beautiful than that to be seen in four sparkling

eyes when looking into one another. And to be sure, there were never four eyes in Berlin more beautiful than those of the burgomaster's daughter and Henning Mollner's. But there was another whose face also became joyous; it was as when the sun breaks through the dark and stormy clouds, and dyes their heavy masses with purple, when the sky becomes ever brighter and brighter, the birds beginning again to lift up their tuneful voices, and the branches of the trees to glitter with the drops of rain. It was thus with the dark grey face of the alderman when he saw the light of the rubies and the glitter of the gold upon his daughter's neck. He saw but this; he took no notice that the arm of the youth was linked in the arm of the maiden, and he heard nothing save the single word which broke from the lips of the happy girl—"Found!"

And Elizabeth rushed towards him with her arms outspread, but not alone, for Henning Mollner kept close to her. He could not have done otherwise even had he wished it, for Elizabeth dragged him with her, though not knowing how. The chain which he had thrown round her neck had caught in his collar, and he would either have had to tear himself loose, or remain as he was, fast chained to her.

She tried to speak, but Henning interrupted

her ; and when he began to speak, she interrupted him. But her father seemed to want nothing more, now that he saw the chain and knew that it had been but a dream. He fell back into his arm-chair, not as if deadly faint, but rather as one who rests after a dangerous sickness and feels himself restored. One hand held the chain, with the other he took the girl's hand in his, whilst his eyes rested cheerfully on her countenance.

“ Dear father,” she began, “ I couldn't, I didn't know——”

“ No, no, you didn't know the worth of it,” he interrupted her. “ How heavy it is ; and if it was light as down feathers, I wouldn't exchange it for all the treasures of old Berlin. Frau Fides, our ancestress, wore it in honour, and no woman in the Mark was fairer to look upon. And my grandfather Albertus, how he rode about with it like a monarch. He gave up the town, but not the chain. I do not say he did right, but the chain was preserved. My father Matheus, may his soul rest in peace ! locked it in his chest. He was a severe man. He feared the envious, and wore no golden ornament—nay, he would wear no coloured garment. But the chain !—Frau Fides' dream has been accomplished.”

Whilst he was talking, he observed a smile on Henning's face. Perhaps the lad smiled because

he was so singularly fastened, or perhaps because the stern and laconic Herr Johannes had never been heard to talk in such a way as this. The burgomaster asked—"What is he doing here?"

"It is Henning," said Elizabeth. "Don't you know Henning Mollner? Dear, good Henning, it was he brought me the chain back."

"The chain!" cried Herr Johannes. "Was it then lost?"

Elizabeth was confused and hurried, anxious to tell her tale in the fewest words; but as she always began again and again at the happy termination, as one does when one has anything unpleasant to account for, her father could gather no information from all she said, and knew when she had done just as much as he had known before. Henning, who stood holding his hat respectfully in his hand, had been for some time making signs as if he wanted to speak, and the burgomaster at last said to him—"Do you speak."

Henning began, and though only a tradesman's son, he told the circumstances from first to last, so that a senator could not have told them better. How it began, and how it ended, it was quite a pleasure to hear how he told it all; all that was bad about the matter he passed over quickly, and he managed it so that the wine alone seemed in fault in all that had been done. If Johannes had not

been ill, he could hardly have helped laughing to hear how everything had happened so contrary-wise, and how the honourable Herr Bartholomew had rolled about the floor with Herr Dietrich Wyns ; and, indeed, all that had taken place between Elizabeth and Eva Schumm was told, so as not to appear so very bad ; and Elizabeth learned now, for the first time, that it was Eva Schumm who had torn her necklace off in attacking her, because Elizabeth had laughed at her father. Neither of the two had noticed the loss of the chain, it was only a wonder that it had not been trodden under foot.

“ But, Henning !” asked Elizabeth, with surprise, “ how did you get to know all about it ?”

Henning smiled : “ My little finger told me.”

“ You are a fool !” said her father.

“ Fools are to be found everywhere,” answered the boy, quickly ; and the lad’s answer in nowise displeased the burgomaster, and the girl bethought her of the harlequin, and blushed red all over.

“ Do you forgive me, father ?” she asked ; and as he nodded his head assentingly, down she knelt, and to be sure, with her knelt Henning.

“ What is the lad about ?” asked the father. “ I have nothing to forgive you for : unless I ought as alderman to punish you for breaking into the senate-house ; but then I shall have to give you a

letter of thanks for saving the reverend Herr Steeger from being suffocated."

"I cannot help myself," answered Henning; "I must do as Elizabeth does; you see she has got me fast."

The burgomaster now remarked how it was; and Elizabeth, who now perceived it too, blushed again; but even though her father bade her, she either could not or would not let him loose, and Henning said it was not for him to free himself when a lady held him fast.

"Then I shall have to do it," said Herr Johannes, at the same time taking the chain from the girl's neck and the youth's collar, and gazing on it again with an air of delight, which was surprising to the daughter; he then placed it in the most secret drawer of his chest and locked it up.

And he became cheerful to a degree that no one remembered having seen him; not even Henning Mollner, who had lived in the house the whole of his childhood. His melancholy and his sickness seemed to have departed together. He entered into conversation on indifferent matters, and amused himself with talking to the young people about the banquet; and he laughed heartily at Henning's description of his finding the provost under the table, lying with his head over a stool

like a man about to suffer decapitation. But when he came to ask Henning how his dream about Saint Nicholas was to go on, the youth lowered his head, and looked at him archly out of the tops of his eyes.

"Your reverence, dreams are fallacious. I have heard my uncle say that healthy cattle, for instance, never dream."

"Yes, it is so, indeed," murmured Herr Johannes, with an expression of satisfaction. "I was ill, and my dream was a lie."

Henning was about to take his leave, for what business had he in the burgomaster's house ; but on beginning his farewell greeting, Herr Johannes looked him all over, and said, with a friendly air, "Henning, stay with us a little ; we have not seen each other for a long time, and we have many things to say to one another. Don't you know what I mean ?" he continued, as the youth stood before him with a modestly assured air, but evidently ignorant of his meaning.

"Your reverence, the time when I sewed the women's gowns together is over and gone ; I suffered for that five years ago."

"I would talk of other things."

"The false alarm of fire ! that is nearly four years and a half ago, and I was locked up three days for it."

“What I mean is a matter which is not made up yet, though of still longer standing.”

“Your reverence, it was not I who threw the Jew into the vat, he jumped in himself; there are plenty of people who will swear to it.”

Herr Johannes must have been in a most exceedingly good humour, for he did not reprove the lad even with a look. To be sure, it was not everybody who could have descried the rogue in the lad's innocent face. The burgomaster turned himself half away, that Henning might not see what was passing in his mind, and then assumed the most serious air he could put on.

“But when the Jew struggled and cried out in the vat, there were plenty of people to swear that nobody but Henning Mollner could have brought it about,” said the burgomaster.

“They swore otherwise though before the court, your reverence.”

“And the poor Jew was banished besides.”

“Your reverence, that proved the wisdom of the judges. What could a Jew be seeking in a vat but beer? He who seeks what is not his, is a thief, and a thief may be very thankful that they only send him from the town. ‘It is the law,’ said the learned senate.”

“Henning, we have not seen each other for a long time; I would speak to you as I used to do

in former times, not as burgomaster, but as Johannes Rathenow, your father's friend, he who brought you up and loved you as a child; and answer me as you did then. There is a great talk about you in the towns; you are grown tall and strong. They say you have sown your wild oats, but that there is something else you are sowing; I know nought of it, and would rather not believe it. But you have friends and a party. Friendship and influence will often betray, and many a one has ascended by trusting to his friends only to have a deeper fall."

Henning crossed his hands with his cap over his breast: "It was so with my father. How much he relied upon his friends!"

"Nor were his hopes built on sand," said the burgomaster. "But there are two sorts of friends, different as are day and night; such as one may be proud to be seen with when the people whisper, 'See, he keeps company with such and such persons, and they talk to him confidentially!' But there are friends, Henning, whom one doesn't like to be seen with, whom one may blush to have to greet if one meets them in the street, such as one hurries to get past; wild companions who spend their nights in wine vaults, and sit drinking outside the gates, so that a respectable man will go out of his way to avoid setting his foot on the

print of theirs ; such as make noises in the streets, and cut the buckets loose from the wells, and tie cats to them ; who fasten strings across the street, that the belated passer may fall over them ; who quarrel with watchmen and peaceable citizens. They have a mouth as open as a barn-door when there is anything like riot, but creep into their hole like a mouse, and mice have ever a way out, when authority interferes."

Henning listened with respectful attention, but not a word did he try to put in.

"Such friends as these have plenty of courage," continued Herr Johannes, "when there is any mischief on foot ; no hedge-stake is too fast for them, and no wall too high ; they have no greater pleasure than quarrelling with the beadle or the guard. But they venture further : they play pranks with travellers ; and it is a light matter for them, if they meet with any one who they say has too much on his load, to help to divide it with him. Henning, friends like those are dangerous. If they have a bold man to lead them, they are a tail without end ; but if he would see them before him, they are like a shadow, which one would fain have between himself and the sun ; they are neither to be seen nor laid hold of."

Henning remained silent.

"They have their hearts on their tongues,"

continued Herr Johannes ; “ to change St. Peter’s tower with St. Nicholas’s were an easy thing, to hear them talk. And they have seduced away many an honest man’s son—many a one who didn’t know what he was going to become, and who ended his days on the gallows, or in the heath, among outlaws. You have a good house, Henning, in old Berlin ; it is snug and warm, and your father and father’s fathers lived and died there in honour, and were laid in the dust with masses and chants.”

“ May they rest in peace !” said Henning, crossing himself.

“ Let no one be above his trade and calling. They were people who thought themselves well enough off to be creditable good citizens ; they prospered, therefore, and were well spoken of during their lives.”

“ And were forgotten in their deaths,” murmured Henning.

“ You are a likely young man ; keep amongst your equals, and you will do well. There is many a pretty maiden with a handsome dowry among the tradesmen’s daughters. Knock at the door, and they will say, ‘ Come in.’ You will become a burgess and a master, one to make an appearance, and perhaps some day be a senior in your guild, whose voice may be heard in the towns.”

A great alteration had taken place, during the

last moments, in the face of the young man; the lamb-like expression was gone. There was a crafty twinkle about his eye, and his lip was somewhat curled up; but his attitude remained the same.

“There is something more I want.”

“What more, dissatisfied boy? You have to learn how to sit still, for as a lad you were always climbing the highest trees and away over every hedge; if you could have flown like a ball over the tops of the houses, it wouldn't have been high enough. But you are not a boy now. Or is it because your hand has had a sword in it once, that you think it too good to handle the shears or the yardstick? Every good citizen is obliged to learn the use of the sword; but understand, boy, not for his own good, but for the town's. The other is left for nobility and gentry—they are for themselves; the citizen is for nothing but his town, and is nothing without his town. He is a link in a chain; as a portion of the chain he is something worth, broken out of it he is worth nothing. Hang your sword against the wall in the armory, and look to it each Saturday, lest it rust and be not ready when the town has need of it. But draw it not save then, for it is a sharp tool, and has two edges; one edge is for the enemy, but the other for oneself. But what is it

you want more? You have a plentiful subsistence, a farm and meadows outside the gate, which a nobleman might envy you,—what is it, then, you want more?”

“The principal is forty-seven score of groschens; I have not reckoned what the interest comes to.”

The burgomaster stood up: “If that is the only breach, it shall soon be made good.”

“It is an old breach, your worship; one that thirty years of wind and weather have made larger.”

“It shall be made good, Henning, come the material from where it may,” he added, walking the chamber with a heavy foot.

Henning cast a look to where Elizabeth was standing playing on the window with her fingers; she blushed, and Henning’s face had again changed its expression.

“That shall be made an end of,” continued Herr Johannes; “there shall be no more harping upon that. You shall be paid—I give you my word as burgomaster, you shall be paid to the last farthing. Come here again on the Monday after Estomihi, and the forty-seven score groschens shall lie on the table, not a groschen short. Well, boy, are you looking at the table because it is empty. You have my word upon it.”

“Yours, Herr; but the senate’s?”

“As Johannes Rathenow, I pledge you my word; and now I bid you, in virtue of my office, not a word more against the town. I stand in its place, and take its debt upon myself; and as true as there is a God in heaven, and saints who watch over us, you shall have your due, as I hope for mine.”

The youth made a movement as if he had something to say against it; Herr Johannes observed,

“Is there something still you want from me and the senate?”

“Less from you, dear sir—indeed, nothing; and more from the senate—indeed, all!”

“It is for you to take, and not to ask who it is gives that. The senate——”

“Will give nothing!” interrupted Henning, boldly. “Herr Johannes Rathenow,” he continued, in a husky tone, “may Heaven prosper you when you come into collision with the senate! But though you have a loud voice, the senate has a louder—they are many, and you are but one—he who shouts the loudest is plainest heard. But give me a word, and let me call my friends together; and if the senate’s voice were ten times louder than it is, it shall no more be heard than is the tinkle of the Hospital bell calling the old women to prayers against the bells of Berlin and Koeln ringing the alarm of fire.”

“Henning,” said Herr Johannes, with a threatening gesture, “do you not know that you are threatening the senate in the face of the burgomaster. Understand, sir, the burgomaster has not heard it; but if it came to his ears, he would forget the services which Henning’s father did him. Understand, sir, you shall not call your companions—you shall not sound the alarm—or may confusion and ruin fall upon your head! Beware, boy!”

He trod the floor for some time with hasty steps, and then he remained standing before the lad, and laid his hand on his shoulder, half as a burgomaster, half as a father might have done. “Henning, for my sake, listen to me rather than to your friends. It is not good to stand against the authorities. It is against the laws of God and man. They who have drawn the sword against their rulers, have ever suffered by the sword. They who have quarrelled with their town, being burghesses, as did Nickel Kuro and Erich Falke, have ever come to a shameful death, gaining the good word of none. Would it tend to your reputation to sound the alarm bell, and make a shamble of the towns? If your body should escape the wheel, still your name would be written in the chronicles as rebel, and be read as such by children’s children. You bear an honourable name, keep it unsoiled. Would you seek dishonest fame?”

Elizabeth interrupted them here, to announce that Andreas, the summoner, was coming towards the house. Perhaps she did it not unwillingly, for the pretty lady might think that the conversation, uninteresting to her, had lasted long enough.

"Then, on Monday, at this time, you will be here again," said Herr Johannes, nodding kindly to Henning.

Henning was now obliged to go, much as he would like to have remained, and, notwithstanding he had many things more to say. Elizabeth, too, had nodded to him confidentially. He almost ran over Andreas on the stairs, who was not a little surprised to find Henning Mollner in the burgomaster's house, where he had not seen him so many years; but he would have had no time just now to consider how it came to pass, had it been his business to do so, for he had an unpleasant task to perform. He had taken no oath to serve two masters, for formerly the burgomaster and the senate had been but as one; what the senate had agreed upon, the burgomaster had put in execution. But now he had to go between senate and burgomaster, as if they were both masters. And he was sorely puzzled, as a man might well be, considering how matters stood. Besides, he honoured and esteemed the burgomaster

highly, who had always treated him well, and done him many services.

“So early, Andreas,” said Herr Johannes. “I didn’t expect to hear of the senate before ten o’clock at the earliest, after the lengthened sitting yesterday.”

“That signifies nothing, your worship ; they are in session already.”

“And who are they who are so momentarily anxious about the town’s welfare ?” asked Herr Johannes, still in the best temper.

“Herr Mathis Blankenfelde was the first, and then the Bergholzes and the Hoppenrades, and what that means your honour well knows.”

“Can the Koeln people, then, drink the most ?”

“Nay, as for that your worship, they all look awfully pale, particularly Herr Hoppenrade, and their eyes are still staring. They had to be conducted, every one of them.”

“And they send for me, that I may get hold of them under their arms.”

“Yes and no, your worship ; that is, just as one takes it. It is usual for the burgomaster to send for the senator, when negligent, and reprimand him. To-day, it is the other way. I could scarce believe my ears, as they told me ; and it was with

a grimace! But it is all over with the old way of doing things, say I."

"And what was it they told you to say?"

"With permission, your worship, I am sworn in, they say, servant to the senate, and I am bound, therefore, to speak out as the senate orders, and so I shall speak. And that is why——"

"What is it you are to tell me?"

The summoner smote his breast, as he might well do, having such a duty to perform. "The honourable the senate now assembled, in the absence of the burgomaster, the reverend Herr Mathis Blankenfelde, alderman and consul of Koeln, being president, make mention that the senate has taken umbrage at the many complaints——"

"The senate! What is the senate without me?" interrupted Herr Johannes, and his large eyes opened wide upon the speaker. "The senate is nought without its head!"

"Save in time of necessity and general peril," answered the servant, with a more natural tone; but he was still speaking what the senate had put into his mouth: "At times, when the common weal was endangered, it was customary that the senate might take counsel, even without the burgomaster, and that he who was the worthiest and nearest should preside. When it was held in Tilly Wardenberg's time,—they bid me give you notice,—the senate

met, and took counsel for its own security, since that was not to be had by the means of the burgo-master, or the next in seniority."

This was too much for Herr Johannes, and he bit his lip, but he answered quietly, "That happened, if I remember right, at the command of the Emperor Sigismund. What Emperor, then, or mighty prince, has sent over night to Berlin? Through what gate did the messenger arrive, that I know nought of it, nor am informed of the necessity which calls the senate together? Or what has taken place since yesterday, to make them crawl out of their beds to the saving of the town, when at other times the alarum bell is not loud enough to bring them together?"

Andreas made answer, in a very diminished voice: "Your worship, there are very few of them—Herr Blankenfelde's party. The rest are asleep at this moment; for there was sharp work yesterday in the old senate-house."

"And what is it, then, that the honourable senate, now in session, bid you tell me?"

"That they have taken umbrage at the many complaints," continued the servant, from where he had left off, "which the guilds and the commonalty have to bring against Herr Johannes Rathenow——"

"Have to bring?" interrupted Herr Johannes.

“So they have not laid their complaints yet! The wise senate has a good scent for the smoke and stink which is about to be made.”

“That it is not fit and proper that the burgomaster, who is no one without the senate, interfere and negotiate alone in matters which concern the senate as a body; therefore, forasmuch as he hath resolved to negotiate with Henning Mollner, son of old Mollner——”

“’Tis true, he hath resolved,” interrupted Herr Johannes.

“Thus prejudicing the rights of the town, in a matter requiring judgment, consideration, and agreement——”

“The judgment has been thirty years in arriving at maturity, and every child has seen it clearly all the time.”

“As, therefore, and particularly on this account, the burgomaster hath taken upon himself not only to fail to deliver, but indeed to tear in pieces in the open street, the petition delivered to him in due form by the honourable company of Merchant Tailors, to be laid before the senate, and hath thereby given occasion to much noise, tumult, and shedding of blood; the senate therefore awaits that Herr Johannes Rathenow may present himself before them without delay to stand upon his defence,

that the senate may judge and give judgment according to law and precedent."

The red vein on Herr Johannes's forehead swelled high, to a degree that Elizabeth had never seen, and scarcely aunt Gertrude. Both trembled, and the summoner Andreas, whom nothing save duty could have compelled to have done what he had had to do, lowered his head, not liking to meet his master's look.

"Say to the senate—no, to Herr Mathis Blankenfelde and his tail, that Hans Rathenow comes not, nor has aught to answer; that he will scatter the senate which sits in his absence, and speaks without justice or conscience"—and with that he lifted a stool, and threw it from him with a force which none could have expected from so old a man, particularly when unwell. The stool cracked in every joint, and would have broken had it not been of sturdy oak.

And he trod up and down the chamber much enraged. "Call me before them! sit in judgment over me! they who fail to support me, and deprive me of my privileges! I give occasion to tumult! Holy Nicholas! they shall answer me that. The tailors deliver their petition in due form!—it was riot, open rebellion! Say to Mathis and his set, I will tear it again into a thousand

small pieces! Woe to the authority which receives a petition offered as that was offered! I risked life and limb! and for them, for the honour of the senate! and they would judge me. Say you——”

But Elizabeth sprang forward, and embraced her father; even Gertrude approached with a supplicating look, and Andreas was much distressed: “You are sick yet, father,” said Elizabeth.

He must have felt that he was so, and he paused for a moment.

“When the rest come together, there will be a different determination,” murmured Andreas.

“One thing to-day, and another the next day; this to-day, and that to-morrow,” said Herr Johannes. “It is this that brings us shame and discredit. We have no command, and we persevere in nothing; but I will amongst them.”

“Father, father, not to-day! the wine is in their heads yet.”

“Say to them, Andreas, that they go to bed, that they sleep it off. I, their burgomaster, send them that message! As soon as they are competent to stand with a steady foot, I will come and speak to them; I will speak as there is necessity. No; tell them straightforward, I will answer none of their charges; I will do nought save what I can answer before God, the towns, and the senate.

And tell them this too, that I will conclude with Henning Mollnerr as is my pleasure, and will pay him the debt owing to him by the town to the last farthing, so true as that St. Nicholas guards our towns. Tell them that—enough—now go.”

The servant Andreas might have gone a dozen times as far as the senate-house in the time which Herr Johannes occupied still pacing his chamber to and fro, talking to himself. At last he sent for his servant Hans Dames, and sent him with private orders to Friar's-street, in Koeln. He then dismissed the females, and sat himself down to his chest, whence he took out many concealed drawers and papers.

He remained some time sitting, his head on his hand, in deep meditation: “Forty-seven score of groschens!” he repeated. “It would have been a trifling matter for my forefathers, and to-day I could not make it up without Bartholomew Schumm. The farms at Bernow still a desert since the Hussite war, the stalls at Bukow burnt down, and the last harvest a failure!”

He turned over the papers in another drawer: “These are the old accounts when I had the management of Henning's property—fifty, sixty, eighty—what scores of groschens they made profit, and did not suffer in my hands! The Hussites did not get there. The weaver's boy is richer to-day

than the burgomaster. It is not well when the people are richer than their lords."

And he muttered to himself—"A fine lad, who would be an honour to noble rank; but it avails nothing. He who is not born a master cannot become one; but can a man who is born a master become otherwise?" His thoughts appeared to become more and more melancholy, and many wrinkles gathered on his brow. Just then he came to the drawer which contained the chain, and his eye lighted up again: "This remains to me yet; it was a delusion from hell, and the right of the Rathenows will stand fast!"

CHAPTER III.

PEOPLE call a day dull on which the sun does not shine. On such a day it is not fortunate to undertake anything, should one have got out of bed the left foot first; for if the first thing that one does miscarries, everything after is sure to go amiss.

The majority of the senators, on the day we speak of, had certainly got out of bed the left foot first, though they probably did not know it, for nothing would prosper or go right with them. Things which generally seemed stable enough, appeared to-day to be whirling round; and what was straight before, seemed crooked to-day. Dull as the day was, they were still duller.

The few whom Herr Mathis von Blankenfelde had contrived to get together, managed to get up a quarrel amongst themselves. The chronicles do

not inform us about what, and the Koeln consul had trouble enough to carry what he wanted.

The provost's misfortune seemed to be the principal cause of uneasiness, even more than the fact that a burgess and tradesman had been fallen upon by thieves on the Spandow heath. The man had been able but to save himself, and get to the gate; all he had was lost. He was now waiting outside, desiring to lay his complaint before the senate, that they might help him, and send out a party to scour the country whilst there was yet time; but he might well wait, for he was a poor, little man, and had no good friend amongst the gentry inside. Those whom he addressed on their way in looked at him compassionately, and shrugged their shoulders, remarking, in answer, "It's sad work!"—or, "These are dangerous times!"—or, as one said, "Good man, why don't you help yourself, you have limbs strong enough?"—or a third, "What were you doing outside the gate in the night-time?"

But, on the other hand, the provost was a good soul, and exceedingly well liked. There was not in the two towns a better man at table or over a flagon of wine; not a single wedding or christening did he ever miss, and he would drink on such occasions with the best, whilst his anecdotes and merry tales suited both old and young. He was

eagerly sought after as father confessor by both sexes. When he could, he forgave; and the penances which he ordered when he could not, were not too severe. If mention was made in his hearing of the unhappy time when the ban of interdict hung over Berlin, and the Abbot of Bernow was slain at St. Mary's church-door, the provost gave it as his opinion, that both the abbot and the Berlin people might have had something better to do; for what good had it done either of them? The one had got to heaven a little sooner than he might otherwise have done, though his benefice at Bernow was by no means a bad place, and he might have been well content to have stayed there a little longer. Again, there were so many holy martyrs, that what did it matter about one more or less. Amongst his own private friends, when the door had been shut, he was known to have said, that martyrdom in times like his was all nonsense. Nepomuk at Prague, whom Emperor Wenceslashad only pushed over the bridge, was made a saint at once; and Saint Nicholas, for all his painful death, had been made no more. Rome was a long way off, and it was very expensive to have friends there. One might merit to be made a saint ten times over, but if one had not money to send to Rome, it was all of no use. It was, therefore, better on the whole to make up

one's mind to endure in this world. It was no equivalent for suffering the pains of martyrdom to have a lamp constantly burning to one's memory, like that before the monument of the Abbot of Bernow, which the citizens dared never let go out. The good provost, meanwhile, had a stomach such as there was not another on either side the Spree. He was the man to drink his fill to-day, and to be ready again to-morrow. He had put many a nobleman to shame, and that everybody knew.

There was, therefore, quite a sensation that such an accident should have befallen just him. If the table had not fallen exactly upon his throat, what he had drank at Thomas Wyns would have been nothing to him. Every one was busy praising his good qualities, and a deputation was chosen to visit, and comfort him, and admonish his house-keeper to tend him well; and another message was sent to Hans Ferbitz, to bid him hold himself at the provost's service day and night, and that the town would bear his expenses.

All this was right and proper, for the provost was a deserving man. He had often been a peacemaker, and prevented broil and dispute. But just as this was being settled, Konrad Ryke came in with the announcement that there was a great deal of excitement in the streets, for the pilfered tradesman, who had not succeeded in gaining the ear of

the senate, was running to and fro in the town, complaining of injustice, and that they who should right him were deaf. Herr Konrad proposed that the senate should give him audience, and do what they could for him. But this caused an almost equal noise in the chamber; some were for it, others against. Why was the man out at such a time? One couldn't hang lanterns outside the gate. The night was the time for sleeping. The watch were for the protection of the town, and not to go across country, beating the hedges in the cold winter nights. But the best reason that they had for talking in that way was, that Hans Makeprang had no friend amongst them. He was no connexion to the rich Makeprangs, who had property near Saint Gertrude's. He was nobody knew who. A good many, therefore, were for taking no trouble about him. Had he been a traveller for a guild, or company, they would have talked differently. But still the majority thought they had better hear him; what had happened to him might happen to another. But when they sent out for him, he was no longer in waiting. They sent next for the town captain, Ritter Ruthnik, but he was asleep, and next for Ritter Britzke, the other one, but nobody knew where he was, and where he passed the night nobody knows even now.

It was now for Herr Blankenfelde to be the

loudest, and to complain sorely of such want of provision, but all the fault he laid on the burgomaster, who was not there. What he said sounded reasonable enough. Andreas, the summoner, came back just at the moment, with the burgomaster's message. Though he did not deliver it perhaps in quite such hard words as the burgomaster had dictated it, yet he told it so that it took effect; he might, perhaps, have had his own pleasure in giving it to the gentlemen lustily. It acted like a spark upon wet powder, causing a puffing and a crackling and spitting. It is impossible to convey in writing half of what was spoken.

Herr Bergholz said: "This is the consequence of letting a man know what importance he is of. Give a dog meat always, and he wont touch bread."

Herr Ryke was of opinion that the Rathenows' coat of arms should have been put a little lower on the wall, when the town made peace with Matheus. It would have been better for them all; for it was more than they had a right to expect, to be received again at all.

But there were worse things said than that.

The secretary, who was a well-intentioned man, was sorely grieved to have to hear all this against the burgomaster, and not one saying a single word for him. But it was not for him to speak. Four out of five were against him. Konrad Ryke should

have been the one to speak for him, and many expected it, for he was a just dealing man, but he was very proud, and could not bear to hear the Rathenows praised.

It was to him that Mathis Blankenfelde came across, leaving the others quarrelling round Herr Bergholz, and he addressed him in a confidential tone, as if they had been the best friends:—

“Do tell me, Herr Ryke, what is to be the end of this? If this is to be borne with, what becomes of the common weal? If we complain, every one says, ‘You do it out of spite against the Rathenows.’ That’s not why *I* do it, nor why *you* do it. But what will be the next? He will forbid us, soon, to talk about the town’s affairs by ourselves, and at the same time refuse to come himself. Is there any justice in that?”

“He is sick,” mumbled Herr Ryke, as if speaking to himself.

“I believe he is sick, if he chooses to be sick,” said Herr Mathis, with a malicious smile; “but whether the folks believe it here, or not? Pride is a sore sickness. May the saints guard us against it! And who denies him his deserts? But desert may die out, just as wealth decreases when nothing is coming in; and beggarly pride is not more laughable, than is a man who thinks he is somebody, after he has ceased to be anybody. But it is

an heir-loom in the family. Albert—but God forgive me if I compare Johannes with him!—he got too high in power and reputation; and, just as he was in pride and vice, so Matheus wanted to be thought the only man who was humble and virtuous; and Johannes wishes to be the only one who has either influence or understanding enough to manage our affairs.”

Herr Ryke nodded assent.

Blankenfelde continued: “Between ourselves, Herr Ryke, it was not for nothing that he openly disgraced the senate by not coming last night; it is not for nothing that he is sick to day, and cannot come; it is not for nothing that he is going to pay that ’prentice lad, and that the summoner found Henning in his house; it is not for nothing that he sends messages to the senate, as if they were a pack of gipsies. He wants to strengthen himself elsewhere; we may go adrift.”

The secretary had finished writing according to the dictation of Herr Bergholz, Herr Hoppenrade, and the party. It was a letter to the burgomaster, to say that, at the risk of the senate’s displeasure, he should by no means pay Henning Mollner, and there was a good deal more of the sort. It was of such a nature that the secretary, when reading it aloud, paused involuntarily, and there was a dead silence. Not a word was spoken. Konrad Ryke

shook his head, and every face was turned intuitively to the bench where Johannes Rathenow always sat. If he had been there just then, there was not one of them would have liked to have written, or read such a document. There was some who thought it was a bad job to quarrel with the burgomaster, at a time when the senate stood so indifferently with the guilds and commonalty. A good many called to mind the words of Niclas Pernewitz, of Brandenburg, and the dangers which threatened their town, and the towns in general; but Herr Blankenfelde had a word for them, too:—

“The trades are not so incensed as we suppose, good sirs. Loosen the reins a little more than usual when you are riding a fiery horse, and he will go quieter than you would think. Who is it who has spoiled all with the trades? Who is the man to look at them with a face like vinegar, and scarcely lift his cap when a master greets him? I do not say that all they require is right; I only say that it is not wise to squeeze them under one’s thumb, when a shake of the hand and a friendly word will do all that is wanted. Who was it who tore the petition directed to us, before ever we could read it?”

It now passed round the room, that Herr Bartholomew Schumm was not in the senate; few who had seen him yesterday expected him; and it came

out about the answer he had given to the burgomaster's messenger. It was a thing which no one yesterday would have thought possible. The bridge betwixt the powerful of Koeln and Berlin was broken down; the union betwixt wealth and influence, which many had beheld with fear, and all with envy, was torn asunder. Herr Schumm was not the man to joke, nor Johannes a likely person to look over the insult. Herr Blankenfelde's face was radiant with joy, but he took care to conceal it; but Johannes Rathenow's open enemies broke completely loose, and there was indeed a pretty tumult, for just then came one who had seen the burgomaster, and bore a message from him, that he was surprised that the senate had not given the tradesman a hearing—they who had time to interfere in things which did not concern them.

Good Heavens! what an outcry there was! Even the peaceable ones could not forbear saying it was too much—he wanted to command the senate from out his own house—a prince might have done such a thing to his vassals, or a lord to his dependents—but for an elected burgomaster in a free town, to those who had elected him!

“Such a thing was never heard of,” said Herr Bergholz; but Herr Blankenfelde insinuated that

the chronicles did tell of instances, and one need not go back as far as the pagan times.

Just then came another into the senate, heated and out of breath. He had hardly been able to get through the crowd in the streets, nor had he passed by without being insulted. All the town were outside their houses; the citizens had left their different labours, to listen to Hans Makeprang, who was dancing about like one possessed. He was relating his mishap at every corner, and shouting with the voice of a trumpet, denouncing the senate, and imploring assistance of men and angels.

"A common-place occurrence," said Herr Hoppenrade, yawning.

"You may believe, Herr Hoppenrade," said the senator: "I got as red as a boiled crawfish; the man must be mad, for I never heard words like those that ran over his lips,—and how the people swallowed every word he uttered! I wished myself ten miles away. At last he bawled out, that if no one would help him, he would hie him to Spandow, to the Kurprince, who would not tolerate thieves, as they did here."

A smile circulated round the assembly.

"Laugh away, good sirs," continued the narrator: "there were one or two beside him who

laughed too; but the fellow called out, 'Laugh away, proud gentry! it is not the robber I go to denounce, but the proud masters, they who are sworn to protect us, but who sleep rather, and guzzle, and quarrel together about straws and cobwebs. I know something; I know the prince will bend his gracious ear; he waits only; he will come; he will take away your powers and your judgment-seats, which ye do but sit upon to oppress the poor!' "

"What does the man mean?" cried Hans Mœves; "he is only a pedlar; he belongs to no guild."

"The guild people were not the men who shouted with him," continued the other; "it was the mob who made all the noise. But every one looked curious when they heard this threat; and he went on talking away at the senate, both old and young; and to hear him talk!—they were only old pots, thrown aside in a lumber-room!—it would take a good broom to sweep them all out, and they would not have to wait long before they got one! The one he meant had bid the nobles dance to the tune of the rogue's march, and he would teach the town gentry to dance to it too!"

They were now all tolerably quiet, and listened with more attention.

Mathis Blankenfelde said, "Hans Makeprang

didn't make all that out of his own head; he is half a simpleton."

"So much the worse," said Konrad Ryke, "if some one is prompting him. It's a pity it has gone so far; something should have been done."

"We must call him before us," said some one.

"Go and call him," continued the other. "You would have lost your senses if you had heard him. 'I know one,' he cried, 'that is rich, compared with whom ye are beggars. I know one that is mighty, by whose side ye are weak and miserable. I know one whose little finger is a better protection for us than all your families and quality-folk in every town in the Mark put together,—and that one is our gracious Kurprince.' Good friends, it was a nice mess, and had it not been before Hans Rathenow's house, who knows what would have come of it."

"Before Hans Rathenow's house?"

"Yes, the crowd had drawn that way, and one could neither get back nor forward; I was forced to go with them. How it happened, I can't say, whether they called him out, or whether the noise brought him; he came down, and spoke to Makeprang, and then they began to shout and lament about him, the burgomaster. I don't know what he said, I was too far off; but something he said, that if

he had not been ill, and if he had been in the senate, it would have been different; and then he gave Makeprang a chair, and some bread and a glass of wine, for he was white like death, and trembling in every limb with rage and hunger, and his hair hanging over his face."

"The burgomaster gave the vagabond—?"

"And the fellow sat him on the stool, and swore and blasphemed, I tell you, harder and harder; but I don't know what the burgomaster said to him, for the noise began on the other side, where the statue of Roland stands. I could distinguish Henning Mollner's voice plain enough, and the people shouted at what he said; and the end of it was, that he and his party were to take the field, and see what they could do for Makeprang. He stood on the pediment of the statue, and shouted, waving his handkerchief, 'He who has a heart, let him come with me!'—and up went every cap, and there was a noise; you must have heard it here. And they hoisted him on their shoulders, and the cry was, 'Henning shall be our Roland; he'll do something better than stand there like a statue, and do nothing!' And away they went, with a great noise; and I shouldn't like to give utterance to half that was said openly against us."

"And the burgomaster?" asked Herr Blankenfelde.

"I didn't see him again."

"He had fallen ill again in right time!" said Herr Bergholz.

"They said that he wished Henning to have his way; that there ought, at any rate, to be some one in a town to be ready to lend a hand. It was only what they said themselves, perhaps; but they wanted to make the crowd believe that he said so. But he let two of his servants go with Henning."

Herr Blankenfelde made a wry face, and snapped his fingers, as one never ought to do in a senate-house.

"I was carried away by the crowd, close to Rathenow's house; and the only thing I saw was, that all the windows were full, and Mistress Elizabeth was at one of them, and I saw her nod to Henning in a friendly manner. Just then I got room, and hurried here as fast as I could."

There was a momentary quiet in the chamber; the only interruption was from the distant noise of the crowd in the streets of Berlin. In Koeln all was quiet.

"By saint Peter," cried one of the Koeln senators, "all this couldn't have happened on our side!"

"He does it in contempt of the senate, and we submit to it," said another.

"There would be time yet to prevent it going

on," said a third. "Send after him, and forbid him to take any step without the senate's sanction."

But the majority were undecided. "We have no right to interfere," said one of the oldest of the body; "if it be the pleasure of any one to go out on his own account who dare hinder him?"

Konrad Ryke said the same.

"And observe, good sirs," put in Matheus Blankenfelde, "it would not be prudent for us to do so. As matters stand now, they would stone the messenger, and we might be assaulted going home. Let the lad have his way, and let us wait," he said, in a low tone, "and see whether he does not come back with a cracked skull."

All with one consent seemed anxious to adjourn—nothing more could be done that day. Some perhaps from personal anxiety, others being unwell; but the most of them, not because they were either tired or in fear, but because they wanted to see Henning Mollner and his band sally forth. A spectacle of that sort has always had its attractions—curiosity has led many a one into peril of head and neck. But preach wisdom to fools—robbery goes on under the very gallows. The good gentry might have done better than run after the procession which certainly reflected nowise to their credit;

the only thing they could expect to get would be abuse.

Only three remained in the chamber, Blankenfelde, Bergholz, and Hoppenrade; if Bartholomew Schumm had been there, the influential people in Koeln would have been together.

"Well, what next, good sirs?" began Blankenfelde. "The old fox shews himself at last; who would have thought it? Just the worst that he could have done—I mean, for us. To deery the senate, and hold with the people—Hans Rathenow and the people! Isn't it enough to make one crazy?"

The others laughed.

"Let him pay Henning," said Herr Hoppenrade, "he'll not get it back from Koeln."

"And thanks be to God, not from Berlin either," added Herr Bergholz.

"His grand virtue is on the decline," said Herr Blankenfelde; "but his power—holy Christopher! do but consider—Hans Rathenow and the trades of one mind, and Henning Mollner and his party besides, in a time like this!"

"You cooked the broth, now you must eat it," said Herr Hoppenrade. "You talked it of him yesterday and to-day, when he never had such a thought in his head. It is bad to talk of the Devil."

“ You are perhaps right,” answered Blankenfelde, preparing to depart.

“ But never mind,” added he, “ I will put in my spoon with you.”

“ We have the Schumms on our side,” said Herr Bergholz ; “ the Schumms and Rathenows are separated — what more could you wish in two days ?”

CHAPTER IV.

IN his court-yard, not far from the Oderberg gate, stood Balzer Boytin; he had been reviewing his stud, and he now bade the grooms put them back in the stables. The grooms were grumbling, and one of them, an elderly man, said, "Letting his best cattle go a job like this, I wonder what will become of the business. The poor beasts will come back fit for the knackers, so as no Christian will look at them, curry-comb them, and dress them, and ginger them as we may. And they were good Mecklenberg horses—a prince need not have shamed to own them."

A second nodded to him gently: "I have been in the yard longer than you; it wouldn't be the first time that all went to the dogs."

A third said, "And yet you don't see him come

any lower ; he has more horses now than ever, and seems well off enough."

" Horse-dealing does not bring in all that he has to do with," grumbled the first ; and the second continued—

" And where the rest comes from, never a soul knows."

" What's that to us ?" said the third ; " we don't get less wages ; the soup is no thinner, and the meat no leaner. I always say a good word for those that give me meat ; our master is not one of the common sort. What does it matter to us where his mills are, or where he gets the wind from, as long as his sacks are full ? Everybody else grease and fatten their wretched ribs when they send them out to be sold, but our master gives many a good horse away for almost nothing. How do you know that he does not get more by that than many a near fellow who creeps beyond the barrier and gets his beasts into the suburbs ? How is it that his stalls are full ? I tell you, he understands it ; he knows a thing or two more than here and there one ; he is a man to hear the grass growing, and to know where the birds fly to."

The grooms scratched their heads, and continued their work. Their master was feared by them, not liked : one might see that by their getting out of the way on his crossing the yard towards some

wooden stairs which went up to the town walls, for the yard was close to the walls, indeed, they were its boundary, but there was a thoroughfare for the citizens through its two open gates. The citizens were allowed to walk on the walls, which were much higher than they are now, and a sufficient protection against an enemy ; indeed, there is no account, in the chronicles, of Berlin ever having been taken ; every citizen was a born soldier, having his own station on the walls, should an enemy appear before them.

Balzer Boytin mounted a watch-tower which commanded a view over the fosse into the open country. There was a road through Bernow to Oderberg, which was then an important town and a bonded port ; but Berlin had earlier charters from the Mark-graf. They did not, therefore, necessarily unload their boats there, nor pay customs ; the wine grown in the Mark went through that town to Pomerania, and Nordlandand to the Greeks and Russians. It was not, however, towards this that Balzer Boytin looked, but towards a cross-road which lay across the heath in the direction of Spandow. It was the way, although a circuitous one, that Henning and his party had taken ; it was the best way, they thought, to come upon the robbers by, for they could hardly have crossed the Spree, down which the ice was drifting ; they there-

fore expected, by riding sharply through the forests, to find them somewhere betwixt the Spree and the Havel. It was not to be expected that the rascals would ride into Spandow, where the Kurprince was holding his court, and there was no bridge save there.

Balzer Boytin therefore turned his eyes that way, and watched the company, which every now and then were hidden behind the pine woods till they at last disappeared. There was no dust, as the ground was frozen hard; nor was there any noise, for their leader had bid them keep close together, and ride silently. The only sign of their progress was the dislodgment of the crows on their route, but this also was not long to be perceived.

The horse-dealer leaned his head on his arm, and his face wore a peculiar grin. The day was dull, and cold enough to freeze men of our time; in those days, however, they bore it better. His ugly face, with his irregular yellow teeth, was exposed to the weather, and he stood watching the flight of the crows, and the eagles which now and then rose up, and made circles above their nests. Further out there was another tower, which was built round, and bore a pointed roof; it had been given to Berlin by the Mark-graf Otto for faithful service done, and was the last strong place which

the town had outside its walls. The town guarded it, and a watchman was always there to keep watch as long as he was awake; but he had little to see, for the forest came quite round it. Balzer Boytin could not therefore enjoy a very wide prospect on that side.

But still it would have appeared as if his little grey eyes could see beyond the forests and the low dense clouds which were hanging quite down to the tops of the trees. The country must have been well known to him, for every now and then he lifted his arm intuitively, and grumbled a word or two, pointing with his finger, as if speaking to some one and shewing him how it must be done. All around was quiet, for it was the hour of noon, and the burgesses were sitting at their tables, though now and then a blast of a horn might be heard in the distance, as if from some hunting party.

A man carrying a halberd came along the wall under him; it was the one who held the watch, and Balzer recognised the tailor Zademack, and returned his greeting.

“What’s the news, neighbour?” he cried down to him.

“I ought to ask you that, for you can see further,” was the answer.

“That’s as it may be; the air is thick. Come

up here, neighbour, and see if you can see any thing."

The tailor mounted up; he could watch on the tower as well as on the wall.

"Well, do you see anything?" said Balzer, laughing.

"It's all grey alike."

"No; see, there, and there!" and he pointed away over the flat ground to where there was nought but forest. "See the sun rising red there?"

"Towards Spandow?"

"Yes, if you like."

"Master Balzer, you are dreaming;" and the tailor looked at him as if he didn't know what to make of him. "It's afternoon now, and the sun sets down yonder."

"But I tell you it is rising yonder—red, red as fire—over Berlin, burning red over the old regime. If the boy comes back, and brings a few robbers with him, don't you think the coming in will be different to what the going out was. If the gentry's teeth chattered before, how will it be then, eh? Who will hang the thieves? The senate, do you think? Will the burgesses allow that? It is we who save the town's honour; we are the masters."

"And all this about a pedlar!"

“ And if it had been a Jew, it was for them to do it, and they didn’t do it. We risk our lives for it, and ours will be the recompence.”

The tailor laboured sadly over the other’s idea :
“ They’ll let it pass over.”

Balzer Boytin grinned in his face for a while, and then said, “ I think so, too. They are all tailors,” he murmured.

Hans Zademack crossed his hands on the top of the halberd he was leaning on. It was some time before he spoke : “ Henning’s a bold lad, and what he aims at he’s sure to hit ; but he’s not fit for that sort of thing, he hasn’t the right blood in him. If no one who has experience stands at the head of it, it will be as it has been.”

There was a good deal in the malicious smile which spread over Balzer’s face : “ Well, then, your Herr von Blankenfelde, perhaps ?”

“ Go along with him ! he has turned round since yesterday. He cocked up his nose in the senate to-day, where he sat as president. He is not for us ; he is only for Koeln and himself.”

“ So, so ; why yesterday in the vaults you said——”

“ One is just as good as another.”

“ That’s a bad job, neighbour—a very bad job. In two large towns like Berlin and Koeln, shouldn’t

there be one who would put the thing in the right direction?"

"You were talking yesterday about Rathenow—about Johannes, I mean. He is no friend of mine, but if the quality people hate him, I don't like him the worse for that; he is burgomaster, and the senators have to obey him."

"That's what I say," answered the horse-dealer.

"And if they don't—donner wetter!—he will—"

"Do what?"

"Speak out."

"Very likely."

"He'll thunder about their ears."

"Perhaps he will; but if the bolt does not strike? He is, to be sure, Albertus' grandson, but then he is Matheus' son as well, and he is a patrician still."

"Who is there among the people who can do it?"

"There you are right again; I know no one amongst the people. Many a one means well just now, but who can answer for him if he have the power. There's many a one would tread the old lumber underfoot heartily, and pull the roof off the senate-house to let fresh air in; but, good Heavens! there wants a head to put it on again, and set it right too. Many a one who hates the authorities now, what would he be if he was one

himself? wouldn't he do the same, and hate the people as much as he now hates the senate? Come, tell me of one? Henning Mollner, you say yourself, is a hair-brained fellow."

"God protect us from such like! Nothing good would come out of that. Who would entertain respect for him?"

"The landlord in the senate-vaults has his heart in the right place; he hates the gentry in his soul, but he is so prudent that very few know it."

"He!" exclaimed Zademack; "a drawer, a vintner! Eh, I'd rather pack my bundle on my back, and trot out of old Berlin, than that such low fellows came into the council-chamber."

"Well, then, what do you say to Bartz Kuhlemey? He would look the burgomaster very well."

"Yes, if we were all oxen. He's a good drover, and has a voice like three bulls. That would be something towards our general necessity, if the butchers sat in the senate."

"Yes, you are certainly right there," answered the horse-dealer; "though I fancy they who know how to go about beasts might have a good idea how to handle men. How is it in your guild? Is there no one amongst the rich clothiers?"

"There's nothing there. They who heckle the wool would think themselves better than they who weave the cloth, or than they who cut it. For

God's sake, none of them ! And besides, though with all respect to our guild, I wouldn't like to see any of them on the benches. And why ? Because everybody would think ' I'm as good as they are.' "

" And right enough," said Boytin ; " and what does it signify ? it would be the same with the other guilds. The bakers, the shoemakers, the cutlers—who is there amongst them who is better than another so much so that others would see it ? And suppose that a shoemaker did become burgomaster—good God ! would I have a burgomaster to mend my shoes ? "

" God forbid ! " said the tailor.

" Then let us look further. There is no one among the gentry, nor among the guilds either. "

" That would be a nice job," said the tailor. " The corporations are parts of the towns ; they are like the works in a watch, one wheel works into another ; that is how all goes on. All besides the works is by-work ; it may be ornamental, or it may be ugly—it's no matter so that the works are good. "

" Very true," replied the horse-dealer ; " but there must be a some one to wind them up every eight days, or else they would stop, though it was the very best work from Flanders or Nürnberg ; therefore, if there is no one lower than the guilds,

nor any one out of them, it must be somebody who is above them."

"Not a patrician."

"Of course not; but it must be somebody from outside. Now there is many a knight from amongst the nobility."

"A wolf in the sheep-stall!"

"In Italy, where I have been, as you know, good neighbour—and the burgesses there are jealous of their rights as they are nowhere else—they never let any one connected with the town have anything to do with the government; they therefore choose their rulers, whom they call "podesta," from a distance,—do you understand?—a stranger. That's different to one amongst us, whose mother we have seen wiping his nose. What does a stranger care whether Hinz or Kunz gets the better or the worse? A stranger has no connexion in Berlin more than in Koeln—there's no relation-work; he has his eyes clear, and can see what is best for the town, and what is right and proper."

"But the town's purse pleases a stranger as much as it does our masters and gentry."

"Yes, to be sure; but then he must be rich, so that our town plunder is beneath him, and he must hold up his head so high that our little differences won't reach to his knee."

“ But still he must have a feeling for the towns.”

“ Why, yes—a great heart and an open eye. What is a town by itself? He should see over many towns.”

“ Such as the circle of the Mark.”

“ Quite right. Now tell me, neighbour, what's the good of the league between the towns as it is now? To be sure, it's down on parchment, that one town shall stand by another. But when does that ever happen? Is not one jealous of the other? Are there not always excuses when they should be ready? The towns are well enough, but it's the gentry who have their own way in them. The burgesses are ready enough to help one another, but some one in the senate happens to have a grudge against some one else, and another does not want to quarrel with some other person. Holy St. Christopher! they seized the poor wretch before our very walls. What good was the town league to him? We want some one over, above, the town league, to have the word of command without spite, and hatred, and envy.”

“ But still he must have an eye to our privileges.”

“ Of course,” answered the horse-dealer, and he fixed his eye steadily on his companion; “ he must have an eye to our just privileges, and he

should have an eye to look over the whole country. It's a pity that directly one puts a foot outside the walls, down there comes a highwayman upon him ; and if one makes free to open one's mouth about the conduct of the gentlemen inside, they shut it for one, and throw one into the dungeon ; and if one gets one's flour mealed, the miller takes as much from the peck as the gentry please who own the mills. The mills belonged to the lord of the land at one time ; they were differently managed then ; the burgess hadn't to find fault with the miller then."

" It must be altered, must that."

" Altered ! that's what I say. They pride themselves, do the town gentry, on the rights they have won from the Mark-grafs. Well, and who gets them, who warms himself at them, who eats or drinks of them ?—The patricians. Do you or I get anything by them ? Does the honest burgher get anything by their coining the money, and putting the droppings into their pockets ? by their judging and sentencing ? And whom do they sit in judgment over ? Us ; and how ? Heaven only knows ! When I was a child, I used to hear them talk about old times, when the Mark-grafs had the upper hand. Do you think it was worse then ? God forbid ! the people were not half so hard put to. The princes were rich and generous ; they

showered gifts around them with open hands ; and if a man couldn't pay, they forgave him. Do you ever hear of such a thing in our days ? Our people ! they scrape and grind as long as there's a straw left. The widow's last mite—give it here ! and that they call justice."

"Do you know any stranger who would do better ?"

"I do know one," answered Balzer Boytin, drawing himself up ; "but it won't do to talk about him here. Come into my snug room, over the stable yonder, when your watch is relieved. No one can listen there, and I'll tell you something that will gladden your heart ;—that's to say, if you are a prudent man, and can keep a close tongue," he added, in a low voice, and with a look which expressed much.

CHAPTER V

THE band of youths, led by Henning Mollner, sallied out, as we said before, through the Oderberg gate; but leaving the road as soon as they crossed the bridge, they bent their way to the left towards the forest. It was not very thick in that part, for there were many sand-hills; and, again, ponds of standing water and morasses, with a mixture of grass and rushes, overhung in places by melancholy-looking willows.

The wide pine woods, of which but little now remains, going by the name of the Maiden's Forest, began at the other side of the small brook which, coming past Bernow, supplies the water which surrounds the present Altes Schloss, and passing through the lower part of the town, empties itself into the Spree. Further on, the forest became thicker

and thicker, such as no one would have liked to enter if alone. It was an immense triangle. The Spree and its meadows cut off one side between Berlin and Spandow; indeed, the way from one town to the other during winter time laid across the forest. Towards the west its boundary was the Havel, which made creeks into it large enough to be called lakes. The third and largest side was the high road betwixt Berlin and Botzow, now called Oranienburg. The forest did not actually cease on the highway-side, but spread some distance to the east towards Barnim, where there were again immense forests.

A little bridge, wide enough for a single horseman, led over the Panke, a brook beautifully shaded in summer by verdant forest trees. Trifling as the water appeared, it was such as no horseman, who did not know the footing well, should have ventured to cross, for in many places it was deep, and with unsafe ground on both banks; many a one from Berlin had been drowned in it. To look at the trifling stream, one would think that its course might be stopped by putting a foot across it.

Henning called a halt at this bridge, and stationed himself at the side, whilst his troop rode over the bridge one by one. It took some time, for there were about two hundred of them, and some were mounted; but there were not a few who had

never set foot in stirrup, and yet could not stay behind when there was a chance of coming to blows. There was sure to be something if Henning led them. It was a funny sight to see how they were armed—one had a helmet, another a cuirass; one was bareheaded, another had a pair of old glaives on his arms; another, who had scarce shoes to his feet, nevertheless bore a huge shield; some of course were armed, as if they expected real service—helmets on their heads, and cuirasses on the breast. The whitesmiths, who were always readiest at anything of this sort, wore complete armour, looking as if they were going to a tournament, or to rescue some unhappy princess, rather than to hunt a band of robbers in the woods. There are foolish folks everywhere, why should there have been none in old Berlin? But the butchers and their apprentices were the best clad for the occasion, for they wore leathern doublets; which could turn many a heavy blow, and short spears, besides knives in their girdles;—in a word, if the party was not exactly equipped to besiege or take a strong castle, it was quite well enough to drive a nest of robbers from their hiding, though there had been a round hundred or more.

Whilst the crossing the bridge was still in execution, Henning called to his side Hans Make-

prang, who was riding on an old carrion horse, which Balzer had mercifully lent him. Henning was splendidly mounted on a brown charger, the best that the horse-dealer had in his stables. It was a ridiculous sight to see the two side by side—Henning wearing a shirt of mail, which sat like velvet on his manly limbs, and a helmet on his head highly polished, with a sparkle over his countenance, and a restlessness of limb, showing the nature of his anticipations. His eye was everywhere ; nothing in air or forest passed unnoticed ; and he knew every man by name, as they crossed the bridge one by one ; and he sat managing his horse with his heels and body, whilst the *morgenstern** in his hand swung lightly about, pointing hither and thither, as his orders were. But just as proud, and erect, and gracefully as he sat his horse, just so crooked and cowering together sat Hans Makeprang, looking round him most mistrustfully. His left cheek was bleeding from a wound from the robber's steel glove. On the whole, he was strong and thickset, and, though low in stature, able to defend himself when not too unequally matched. But just now he was trembling in every limb, and his face, which was

* The *morgenstern*, or morning star, was a club, with a ball at the end of it, often set with spikes ; it is seen in paintings of giants.

never one to invite a pretty girl's attention, was now enough to frighten anybody. He squinted so—half-maliciously, half-timorously; and who need wonder at it, for the very party who had turned out, they said, on his account, were making fun of him; and how did he know, if they did happen to regain his cart-load of goods, whether it would be for themselves or for him; and as he every now and then rubbed his bleeding face with his arm, and in so doing drew it across his face, it became red all over, and looked like a blood-pudding. His clothes, too, were torn; and as the man was, so was the horse. Good heavens! there is a deal of misery in the world, man and beast!

Henning, too, was the last to take pity upon him. It was he who had got out the party, and perhaps thought he had a right to repay himself how he could for his trouble. “Well, you son of your mother, fatherless as you ever were, are you not ashamed of yourself, to cause so many honest Christians, whose names are every one in the church books, to lose their noon's nap for the sake of your mud-rags? Since the bear bellowed over Berlin, it never came to pass that two hundred honest lads turned out for the sake of a miserable bankrupt.”

Hans Makeprang's face became uglier than ever: “If I catch them——”

“What, then, Hans?”

“It shall cost them life and limb.”

“Flay them, you mean, and put their skin on yourself, that people may say you look better than they ever saw you do. But the report is, you cheat the country folks like a Jew, and sell cat-skins in the town for hare-skins. Perhaps these robbers, as you call them, were sent after you by the Vehme-gericht. It is a pity they took the best part and left your body behind; it would have spared the towns the price of a rope.”

“Herr, it's not well to joke about the Vehme,” grumbled Hans Makeprang.

“Hans, what are you looking up to heaven like a goose for? Heaven was not prepared for geese.”

“Nor for the profane either.”

“That you will learn soon enough, when Saint Peter gives you a kick away from the gate. Offer up some prayers, Hans. Thy soul is as badly provided as thy doublet. It is full of holes.”

“When the wolf teaches geese, he eats them up for school-money,” grumbled the persecuted man, but at the same time he cast a look of surprise at Henning, who was gazing into the sky. At the same moment the crossbow, which hung at his saddle, was snatched from him, bent in an instant, and pointed to the sky.

There was a general move of astonishment. "What is Henning doing?" But the bolt was sped in the instant, and went whizzing through the air, and there followed a flopping and a shrieking, and down came a mighty bird of prey, such as was seldom seen in those parts. At first it fluttered with its wings wide outspread, whilst warm drops of blood fell on the snow, and the struggle between life and death was frightful to behold; but as its strength decreased, its descent became more rapid, and it came down like a bolt.

High as the bird had been—so high that many had scarcely seen it—Henning had not dismounted, but steadied himself by his legs, as he took his aim, and his aim had been so true, that his bolt had struck in the neck. No one who saw it done could restrain from a shout of applause. There was a general rush towards Henning as he dismounted, and one of them said to Hans Makeprang:—

"You may boast of luck, sir beggar; see, that's an omen. We shall catch your robber-birds now."

"What's the noise about?" cried Henning. "I only wanted a plume—for I am your leader;" and he hurried to where the bird lay; but it was not dead, and struck at him furiously with its hooked bill, so that his hand bled, whilst its eyes rolled frightfully in the death agony. The young man

was forced to put his foot on its neck, and yet it struggled violently. It was a powerful creature.

“We’ll soon make an end of you, as of many another,” he cried, and he struck it once or twice with his weapon, and then, cutting off its wing, he planted it in his steel bonnet; a few drops of blood had sprinkled his face, and now his appearance was indeed dangerous. He sprang again on his horse, and darted to the right and left, to arrange his followers hastily, after the lost time. Some of the best mounted and lightest riders he dispatched towards Bötzw, picking them out a stalwart leader. They were to let nought pass them, and ask all they met for information as to the robbers; for his idea was to close them in in the forest. They were therefore to post men in the brushwood, and communicate with one another by whistling, or sound of horn.

As soon as these were gone, he reviewed the others, and the heavy harnessed ones, as well as the badly equipped, he divided in different directions, so that they should come together again near Spandow; they were to look in the forests, and let nothing escape them, and if they met with any suspicious people, to drive them, if they should take to flight, towards Bötzw, where they would be sure to fall into his hands, or amongst the party sent out first. As soon as he had dispatched the

greater number, and witnessed their departure, he beckoned Hans Makeprang to him.

“Hans, I have sent these hundred men into the wood on your account. If you are playing false, or have spoken an idle word, then God have mercy upon you. If any of these come to harm, drawn out by you on a false errand, I’ll break the ice in the next pond we come to with your skull. Henning Mollner is not the man to trifle with a villain.”

“I am ready to kiss the bones of all the holy martyrs on every word I have said,” cried the pedlar.

“Then swear by the blood of Wilsnack.”

“I swear by the blood of Wilsnack that all I have said is the truth.”

As soon as the man had sworn by the holy blood of Wilsnack, there was of course an end to all suspicion. Henning seated himself quietly in his saddle, took hold of Hans by the ear, and said, “Well, then, Hans, now for our journey, and look well about you.”

They were some thirty or forty who followed the pair. They were Henning’s more particularly known friends, young men whom he could rely upon. He led them into the wood, and he bade them look out for foot-marks, or anything that gave a sign of human life, and, that they might make no noise, he rode mostly where there was sand. Now

and then he left a party behind, or dispatched them in different directions, until there were only two left with him besides Makeprang. Hans began to be anxious—"Why have you sent away all your best men," said he; "all the harnessed ones, I mean. You have left them by the river, and on the sand; and here, where there is most danger, you have but two, in leather collars."

Henning laughed. "You are a tradesman, and no general. Those fellows in steel would be the first to run away, if there was anything to be done. Those coppersmiths are like scarecrows, they make most appearance; besides, they make a noise, and scare the birds away."

"Such rattling iron dolls would be of no good in these thickets," said another.

"Except to frighten the sparrows," said Henning. "But never fear, Hans, my friends here in leather are trustworthy, and would ride round you if you happened to slip away."

They rode further than Spandow, which lies northward of Berlin, without meeting with anything to lead them to the track. The few woodcutters they fell upon had seen nothing; they were poor Vandal peasants from the hamlets round. Their testimony was, however, worth nothing; for had they seen robbers they knew better than to tell of them—all they would have done

would have been to get away. They came at last to an open wilderness of sand, where the roads divided. Henning began—"We have time now, Hans, to hear the whole of your story again, how you were attacked, and what the gentlemen looked like; but, remember, every word on the holy blood of Wilsnack."

"It is soon told," mumbled Hans Makeprang. "I started early with my cart, before it was daylight, for I thought that as no one would be on the road, there would be no thieves either."

"That was the first time your sapience went wrong."

"But as the moon rose and lighted the road, I thought it would be more prudent to turn off into the wood, where it would be dark. Who would be there on a February night when there was nought to be found?"

"That was the second time your wisdom misled you, Hans."

"So I drove my beast into the wood, meaning, as soon as it was light, to get into the road again near Spandow."

"Did you keep to the forest path?"

"No, I came out at Pletzen Water; the moon glittered so cold upon the half-frozen water, it was dreadfully dismal. Just then the beast stumbled over a great root, and I knew something was going

to happen to me. I crossed myself, and said three aves—but it was too late.”

“That’s what I told you, Hans ; you should have learnt to pray earlier.”

“It’s not all right with that lake. When ice is on it, and there is any wind, it sighs and sobs dreadfully ; and particularly just then, when the pine-tree tops were nodding on its bright surface. The harder I drove my beast, the slower it seemed to be able to move.”

“Because you give him no oats, except when you have a chance of stealing them.”

“Oh, no, Herr, that’s not right,” said Hans Makeprang ; “besides, they say that stolen oats make a horse fattest.”

“But there were none to steal by the side of Pletzen Water.”

“It was between four and five o’clock, when I suddenly heard the tramp of horses behind me, and two voices swearing ; it went to my very marrow. I would have got into the wood—but, with a horse and cart, how could I have got the horse along ? and they came upon me in an open spot on the left bank of the lake. There were two, as I said before ; they rode good horses, and were wrapped to the ears in frieze coats. I began to take courage again, for they were talking angrily, and they passed me in a trot as if they

overlooked me in the interest of what they were quarrelling about."

"What were they quarrelling about?"

"Good Lord, in my fright, how could I listen? and what could it be that such rascally fellows would find to talk about? Why is there thunder above, if not to strike such villains, such blood-thirsty dogs!"

"It's winter now—thunder is kept for the summer."

"Such pestilent rascals, such vagabond cut-throats, such Jew-dog blasphemers!"

"Hans, don't do them an injustice; they'll prove Christians, and better baptized than you are."

"Oh, I wish they had been drowned in the font, then there would have been some justice under heaven. Christians!—yes, they were Christians, to be sure; they were talking about Koepkin Zarnekow. Yes, I remember that well enough. Oh, the pitiless, blood-thirsty scoundrels!"

"About Zarnekow!" cried Henning; "why, they will turn out at last to be nobles! Hans, mind what you are about; remember, you have called them Jews! But go on; they turned again——"

"They had got into the wood, and I had lost sight of them, and could only hear their swords clattering, and was blessing myself as one who

has got rid of the nightmare, when suddenly they made halt, and began talking low down to each other. Then they differed again; but at last they both burst out a laughing, and turned back, and came trotting to where I was. 'Thou villain slave,' cried the taller one, 'how darest thou presume to ride through this forest without asking our permission!' Before I could get a word out, the other came up—the fatter one."

"So one was tall and the other fat?"

"And he called out—'Knowest thou not that this forest is ours, dog of a Jew! Thou dost well merit to have thy skin torn from thy body, to teach thee respect!' I had lost all power of speech, and without knowing what I did, I touched the horse with my thong, and bang upon my head came a knock with a stick."

"That struck you senseless."

"No, no, it brought me to myself, and I knew how it was to be. The long one shouted out—'It certainly exceeds everything;' and the fat one could hardly sit on his horse for laughing. I had crept down under the horse, and was embracing its knees as if it had been my patron saint. Just then the taller one bade me open the mats on the cart, that they might see what was inside. The blood went to my head, and I felt as if my heart was going to burst. I sprang up and jumped

upon it, calling out—"It is mine, no one has a right to it!"

"It was a right stupid idea that of yours, Hans."

"Will the rascal dare to talk, too!" shouted the tall one; and before I was on my guard, he struck me in the face with his steel glove, so that I went spinning against a tree, and laid there I don't know how long."

"They knew how to talk to the like of you," said Henning. "They didn't draw a sword; they were well-bred people."

"When I came to myself," continued the pedlar, "I was in awful pain, but I heard the rattling of my cart wheels, for they were driving away my cart, and laying on to the horse. Oh, by the saints, how it did come over me! I pulled myself up, and I ran and shouted—I don't know what I screamed out—and got hold of the wheel. If I had been 'on the wheel' it couldn't have been worse than it was. One of them called out—"What is the matter with the toad now?" And the other said—"Rogue of a peasant churl, the beast has enough to draw without thee." 'Sirs,' I shouted, 'dear good sirs, take pity upon me. God's pity, it is mine—my all—my only property!' 'Thou carrion, Vandal dog,' cried they both, 'darest thou say that that which is ours is thine?' and the tall

one drove at me with his spurs in the neck and face."

"Good people!" cried Henning, "no naked weapon used."

"But," continued the furious man, "I hadn't a weapon, but there was a large stone on the ground. I caught the taller one on the chin with it, it made him reel in his saddle, and I'll bet he carries the marks of it till Palm Sunday."

"And they didn't make an end of you?"

"To be sure, the tall one cursed, and spat, and pushed his horse at me, but I dodged among the trees, and kept on cursing him back, and throwing sticks and stones at him. 'Toad, I will hang thee in thine own entrails!' he cried, and leaped off his horse, as did the other too. He said—'We must silence this villain; into the lake with him, the fishes have not had any flesh a long time. He has made the worst noise he will have to make,' cried they both, and gave chase. Yes, ye raven-croakers, ye church-plunderers, ye incarnate devils, if ye'd been on horseback, ye'd have caught me; but I threw many a stone in their way, and the noise I made frightened them at last."

"So they left you because their boots were too heavy to go a hare-hunting in."

If the man in his wrath had taken notice of the delighted smile on the youth's countenance, he

would have been sadly at a loss to account for it. Henning was in ecstasies, for these were not common thieves, such as have no roof over them, nor house, save a ditch bottom or the gipsy hut ; they were, doubtless, people of rank, too proud to draw a noble weapon on such a low-bred churl. If he was to succeed in catching two nobles and convicting them, how much more honour and credit it would do him, than to get a score of low fellows whom one would hang wherever they were found, and ask no questions. Their companions might cut them down and bury them, if they chose—that was their look out.

Henning now asked for much minute information—what was their appearance, the colour of their coats, and in what dialect they had spoken ; but the pedlar knew very little about any of these things. A tailor receiving a beating would be more likely to judge of the hardness of his castigator's stick than of the fineness of his cloth, particularly in the night time ; but, nevertheless, to Henning's question, whether he could recognise them again, his answer was—"I will swear to them !"

"Hans, don't draw a false oath on yourself."

"There's a deal of swearing in the world about what is not true, nor likely to come true ; what matter, then, about a mistake amongst such cursed

plundering villains? One should smear them all over with tar, and set fire to them, that the devil may find them ready burning!"

The man went on a good while, cursing them to his heart's content, till they again neared the wood. Henning was busy looking for marks or tracks.

"Hans, we don't come upon the track; what do you mean to begin next, suppose all your things are gone to the d—l?"

The tradesman distorted his villanous-looking face to such a degree, that any one seeing him might well have thought of the party whom no good Christian names, whose name, however, had just before crossed Henning's lips; for the man had half opened his mouth for a sort of laugh, and his cheeks were puffed up, and his little eyes peering out.

"What to begin next? When there's nothing to be earned honestly, one must get it the other way. When folks are turned out of a town, where do they go to? No other town would let me in; there is plenty of room on the heath."

"Oh! oh!" cried Henning; "so, straight among these cursed plundering villains?"

"They are not so bad as you think them. I have known some of them go three times a-year to take the sacrament, and many an one gives candles to the Virgin, as large as any prince does. One of

them, who was in the Stellmeiser's service, before he began for his own hand in the Mecklenburg country, gave the Holy Mother of God, at Wilsnack, a dress, with flowers of gold, which might have come as a gift from the Mark-graf himself. He was hanged in Rostock last year. They might have dealt more genteelly with him, for he was a good Christian. Whenever it happened that he was like to put any out of the way for fear of being betrayed by them, he always allowed them full ten minutes for prayer. The poor fellow got caught through that. He had been the death of nine Jews in his lifetime, but not a minute did he leave them to pray in. He was an honest good fellow, not like many others; I have had many a good glass of wine with him. He always paid well for anything that suited him, and didn't bargain like the town people."

"It seems you have had acquaintances outside here, then, before now?"

"How could I pass through the country without, I and my horse? The security which the towns afford you, and which one pays for, is like a loose horse-shoe—it does no good, save to hurt the horse. I have acquaintances enough in Salzwedel and Arnim, and on the other side yonder, in the forest. Barring the bit of cold in the winter, they live, many of them, better than the folk in the towns;

always well-stocked—a swine, a sheep, or a cow, once a-week. And how the peasants respect them! they doff their hats, and remain standing, just like before a prince; and if they enter a house, the women and children hurry as fast as they can to fill them the cup; and a good sleeping place they may have in the chimney-nook, so be that the house stands lonely.”

“You seem to be fretting at not having become a rogue before now.”

“Why, if I had only been one——”

“You would have been flying over head long ago; the birds would have picked you off the gibbet! But, Hans, as you are taking that road, I think we should act wisest to let those thieves of yours go, and take you back with us. On my soul, it would be a saving to the town, and you would get to your desired end the sooner.”

The laughter of his companions startled the pedlar. Henning had said the few last words seriously, and he began to look about him; but he took courage again, and said, with a meaning look, “You wouldn’t do that, Herr Henning Mollner; if you wanted to lay hands upon every man who thought some day to do the town an injury, you would have to hang many an one who is better mounted just now than Hans Makeprang.”

They had now come again to the forest; just

then one of them sprang from his horse at a place where there was loose snow. There were marks of horses' feet, as if going into the wood; and the four followed them immediately, with all possible silence. Hans Makeprang was the only one who shook his head; he saw the hoof-prints plain enough, but there were no tracks of cart-wheels.

The marks did not mislead them. Following through the brushwood, they came at last to an open place, and there, sure enough, were two persons standing, and two horses tied together, at no great distance from them. They were clad in heavy mantles, and wore caps, turned up with fur; one had a cross-bow, and the other a short spear—the woodman's weapons. But, besides, they had well-appointed side arms; one could see, by the first look, that they were not a sort to be faint-hearted. One of them was tall, the other shorter, and more corpulent.

Henning could hardly contain himself for joy; in fact, they were all in spirits, as when a huntsman sees a stag before him. They broke hastily through the bushes, and the two, who now perceived them, made an attempt to get to their horses, but were too late.

The leader shouted, "Halt! not a yard! you must give account of yourselves first."

The taller one lifted his head angrily, and his eyes opened widely, whilst he asked, "To whom?"

"We will tell you that afterwards; you have first to tell us who you are," answered Henning, brandishing his weapon. His party had not been in fault, but had placed themselves so as to make it impossible for the strangers to escape.

"Fellow, we are not of your kidney!" said the shorter one, throwing his cross-bow before him, and putting himself before the other one.

"You are two, and we are four," said Henning; "you on foot, and we on horseback; what is more, we are honest men; but what you are, no one can tell by your appearance," he said, inquiringly.

"So!" said the taller one, and something like a smile played over his noble features; "and whom, then, do you take us for?"

"My little finger tells me that two cut-purses stand before me."

At this, the shorter of the two flung down his cross-bow hastily, and drew his sword, saying, furiously, "Dog, thou shalt repent that!"

"Peace!" said the other, with a tone of command; "let us know first what they mean. They are, perhaps, honest people, who will listen to a good word."

Henning whistled: "That will not do for me. Come, come; you gentlemen of the night, turn

out your pockets, and hold your purses wrong side up ; we shall see then whether a good word will do or not."

The taller one drew back at this, for he began to think that they had fallen among thieves, and the boldness of the attempt coloured his pale cheeks red.

"Sir," said the shorter one, "if my eyes do not deceive me, I know some of their faces ; they look like some of the wanton apprentices of Berlin, who think so much of themselves in their streets and taverns, to the vexation of many a man of birth."

"I think I know one of them," said the other, but to himself.

"They will have vexation again on our account," cried Henning, "as sure as my name is Henning Mollner, and you the people I seek."

"Whom do you seek?"

"A couple who wear spurs just as you do, a pair who ride at night rather than in the day time. You have been night travellers, too ; such as take away what an honest man calls his own, if ever it comes across them ; such as call the forest theirs, and take tolls when and how it pleases them ; such as like that the best which they have least right to. Do you nod ? Is the forest yours, then ? Hollo, good sirs ! I seek a couple of thieves who plundered a man clean last night, close to the Pletzen-

water, a couple of base villains; and I will find them, holy faces as they make; one was tall, as you are, the other short, like you."

"This is too bad," cried the taller knight's companion. "Do you know, dog of a burgess's son, whom you speak to? Down from your horse, and——"

"Hold!" interrupted the other, with a deprecatory look. "He does not know it, else he would speak differently."

"But, Herr, the very idea alone——"

"That a couple of ritters should lay in wait for a pedlar, is that anything so strange in this country, Herr Otto Schlieffen? A man has been robbed; we are two ritters; they find us in the wood where the thing happened. That is suspicious evidence enough, and we want two things: first, a witness of our innocence, and then a certificate of the lad's right to question us. Sir knight of the eagle's feather, where are your credentials?"

Henning, who was somewhat overawed by the quiet demeanour of the knights, and a sort of fancy that he had seen the face of the taller one somewhere before, turned to Hans Makeprang—"Are they the same?" "They are," half-screamed Hans, for he had had no doubt from the first, and was annoyed at the long talk. He was boiling over with rage, and would have preferred attacking

the two at the first, a thing which the others were much inclined to do now, had not Henning checked them with a tone scarcely less commanding than that of the taller opponent.

“ We are four, and they cannot escape us ; but everything must be done in order. Dismount, Hans ; look well at the gentlemen from all sides, and then make up your mind whether you can swear to them, without bringing yourself straight to the gallows for perjury.”

“ Put us to the proof !” cried Otto Schlieben, in the greatest excitement. “ By the eleven thousand virgins, it passes belief—it is too much—I’ll not endure it, Herr !”

“ The right of the strongest !” said the other, smiling, and leaning against a tree — “ a right which holds good everywhere. Back !” cried he, however, suddenly, and it was with a voice and a look before which they all started involuntarily, and most especially Hans Makeprang, to whom it was spoken ; for the pedlar had crept close up to the knights to look at them, or, we may believe it of him, to have a blow at them from behind. But Master Hans started back in such a way, that he stumbled, and measured his full length on the ground. Even his own party could not help laughing.

“ Enough of the farce !” said the taller one, in

a proud tone. "I am tired of it. We are knights, as you see, from the court of the Mark-graf at Spandow, and separated from the rest in the chase. This one here is Herr Otto Schlieben, the friend of the Mark-graf, and son of the Marshal Otto Schlieben. I am Frederick of Tangermunde. I pledge you our knightly word, before God and the holy Trinity, that we are not the parties who fell upon the man, nor do we know who did it. That is enough, by God! and had you not been the young springald you are, it would have been too much. Back, I say again! I have but to wind this horn, and I call fifty riders here who would punish your presumption. Therefore, stand back! I mean well with you."

The knight had his horn in his hand, but he did not put it to his mouth. Henning, too, remained still. He was now certain that they were not Hans Makeprang's plunderers, but he did not like to be threatened.

"Ho, ho! Sir Frederick of Tangermunde, of whom I know nought, if your crooked horn will call fifty, this straight one here of mine will call two hundred. So many I have afoot, only I am not so afraid of your fifty; but I believe you at your word, for your chin is unscarred."

Before the knight could ask what was meant by

that, Hans Makeprang cried out from the ground where he sat, "It is not they."

Henning had dismounted, to shew the ritters that he, too, was without fear, and placed confidence in them. The taller one did not alter his position, nor take any notice of what Hans Makeprang said. He only made a sign to his companion to bring the horses to where he stood; but Henning laughed, and the others with him, and asked Makeprang how he had changed his mind. "They wore spike rowels," said he, "and these are round."

"Herr Younker of Tangermunde," said Henning, "the man retracts his accusation. You are at liberty, and can take your way as it may please you."

The knight had mounted, and he now remained a while looking fixedly at Henning, who was standing before him. There was something severe in his air, but still there was half a smile upon his lips. "So you would seize us on that man's accusation, and release us on his testimony? What do you say to this, Otto?"

But before he could answer, and his answer would have been a cross one, Henning took the word.

"Sir Knight, if your honour suffers through this

man's bearing false witness, and it is your will, we will do to him as he deserves. There is a boghole yonder, we can duck him in it a few times; the water will make him see better, and keep him from going to sleep."

"The man is ill yet, and feverish from his loss," said the knight. "His mistake must not be laid upon him, but rather upon the judges who were about to act on the witness of one like him. Therefore, I bring you to judgment, and ask you, whence have you your authority to act in this matter?"

"Authority!" asked Henning. "Robbers fell upon him, and took all he had."

"That was not right; and if the man had revenged *himself* upon his attackers, he would have acted legally. But who are you, and who has sent you to be a thief-catcher? Are you in the service of the Kurprince?"

Henning laughed.

"Or a messenger from the Vehme?"

"Not that I know of, Sir Knight; they but employ only nobles."

"Then the council of the two towns sent you?"

"The council!" said Henning, with a comical look. "Heavens! it does not know how to send itself!"

“ Well then, in God’s name, who sent you, and gave you command over your two hundred ? ”

“ Oh, I myself, Sir Knight, and the good people who came with me ! ”

“ And who are you ? ”

“ I have named my name already ; for my trade, I am a silk-weaver. ”

“ You are weaving a curious web here, young sir, and meddling with what is not your business, ” said the other.

“ By the saints, he who has not a ready hand may as well stay at home ! Was I to ask leave of the senate first ? They pull every way, and quarrel whether the thick end of the sausage shall lie towards Berlin or towards Koeln ; but what does it matter to them whether a man be stript stark-naked or not, as long as he is not one of the quality ? ”

“ But, nevertheless, order and law require that you should have credentials from them. ”

“ Once for all, Sir Younker, order is not at home in this country. He who does not help himself, gets no help elsewhere. ”

The knight was silent for a moment : “ But they could challenge you as breaker of the peace ; you have interfered with their rights. ”

“ Who knows in the towns yonder what his

right is? Everybody thinks that what he himself does is right, and all that every one else does is not right."

The knight nodded his head to his companion: "Do you hear, Otto?"

"And add to that, Sir Knight, as long as Henning Mollner leaves the senate alone, they leave him alone."

"But, notwithstanding," continued the ritter, seriously, "you have interfered with the rights of one still higher. The sword of justice belongs to the lord of the land. It is for the Kurprince and his servants to punish evil-doers. The ground we stand upon is his; take care lest he take you and judge you for meddling with his princely prerogative."

"The Kurprince!" cried Henning, in surprise. "What has he to do with Hans Makeprang and his wares? and what does it matter to him if I, Henning Mollner, seize the plunderers who robbed him? Yes, if they were the prince's servants it might be different. If the prince will not tolerate thieves and robbers in his land, let him do something to catch them. That would suit me very well; but, sir, never fear, the Kurprince has other things to do besides meddling with such trifles. He has to war with the Mecklenburghers, to keep in with the emperor and the states, but he leaves

robbers and cut-purses to such as we are ; and were it not so, never care for Henning Mollner, he fears the Kurprince as little as he fears the senate of Berlin."

" Would you say that to the Kurprince's face ?"

" Why not ? That which is the emperor's is the emperor's, and what is mine is mine. The Kurprince may govern his own people, but I get nothing from him. That's a bad word of yours, Sir Younker. The Kurprince, I have heard say, would like very well to do away with misdoers, but then his arm is not long enough ; and I think, therefore, that if any one were willing to add the length of his arm to that of the Kurprince, I think it would not displease him. Not a word against him, Sir Knight,—I mean against the Kurprince."

The ritter turned to his companion, and smiled. " Well," said he, " I am glad you know the Kurprince so well. It is not unlikely that you may meet him in these woods, for he is hunting ; but take care, boy, that you do not take the Kurprince for the thief you are after."

He then moved on as if to depart, but suddenly turning again, he said—" I had wellnigh forgotten that you are seeking robbers, and should, perhaps, excuse myself for having detained you so long ; but I may be able to help you. So, if you have

nought against it, tell me in a few words how the matter stands."

Henning, who was now mounted, related all that had happened: how Hans Makeprang had been fallen on in the night, and how he, Henning Mollner, had sallied out with two hundred men from Berlin; how he had divided them, and the probabilities of their not escaping.

The knight nodded approvingly, for he might well justify in his mind what Henning had done, and he muttered to himself that he had acted like an able general. Then he said aloud—

"Now, boy, to work again. I am going to the Kurprince, and when he hears what sort of game is afoot, who knows if he may not himself join in the chase?"

CHAPTER VI.

THE great lake, stretching east and west, which the Havel makes near Spandow, was surrounded at the time of our story by sandhills, growing little but high knotty pine-trees. One of these indentations, which the winter floods had left behind it, and down which a by no means small brook was still running, looked so waste and wild that it would not be recognised as the same in our days. The hillock's sides were more precipitous, held together by the intertwined roots and brushwood binding the layers of clay. Snow and rain has long since levelled all these; the old trees have been cut down, and the roots, withered and rotten, have given way before the floods, which have carried sand, and gravel, and soil, all together, towards the lake. Where there was formerly an uneven ground, there is now only a gentle fall.

The banks are still only scantily overgrown with grass and heath, and the pine bushes in the now spongy ground, no longer attain the same lofty growth. At that time the fern grew body high, a shelter for the blindworm, and snake, and every poisonous reptile, and also for robbers and outlaws, who always found a temporary hiding-place there, unless hunted out by dogs. Where there are now dry holes, going funnel-shaped into the ground, the lighter coloured green betrayed then the existence of water. There was at that time deep water in these holes—the spawning-places of water-snakes and reptiles, now no longer found. These were bordered by thick tall rushes, and were a never-failing shelter for the pursued, and a last one for many who ventured into them too carelessly. On every side these mosses and water-pits formed a natural citadel for armed fugitives, until hunger or superior power drove them out. The high brushwood, untouched by the hand of cultivation, and the bushes and cracking decayed roots, betrayed the tread of the pursuer. A heavy foot sank ankle-deep in the heath, and with a noise which the concealed might hear from a distance.

In those times there also stood immense lumps of stone, blocks of granite, in different places over the heath, ante-diluvian remains, or chaotic formations. Close to the lake there were many of these.

There were two particularly, above a man's height, standing together in such a way, as, from a distance, to appear artificial. At a distance one might swear that they were but one. Either the fall from some height, now no more, or the stroke of lightning, had split them, and the two sides, appearing as if they would fit together, formed a narrow passage. They made an excellent lurking-hole for any who wished to avoid the eye of man. Fancy yourself crouching there, when winter has put on its darkest aspect, and the clouds, heavier from passing over a damp country, and fed from the exhalations of the marshes, are lowering almost to the surface of the hillocks and indentations; a cold damp wind driving over your face, and the crow croaking overhead, on his way to his nest in some withered fir tree, a badly omened unwelcome neighbour; meanwhile, the wind on the lake sighing dolefully, and yourself without a home—a proscribed felon.

The two who were sitting in this very place, wore, as well they might, perturbed countenances, starting, as they did, and looking at one another at every noise. They were crouching with their backs against the stones, sheltering themselves from the piercing wind, and taking turns to look out through the opening. Two lean horses, but fast of foot, were picking up what they could

amongst the snow, lower down in the hollow. They were loose; their owners must have been able to depend upon them. A third, looking still more miserable and worn, was still harnessed to a cart, which laid partly on its side, broken, and the goods which had been packed on it were half fallen out, and laid scattered about, all sorts of coloured frippery.

The two were cursing and whimpering alternately. They had lighted a fire with great difficulty, and built it round with stones, to keep the wind from it, and they crept to it, one at a time, to get a little warmth. But they both went to work when there appeared a chance of its going out, and again if it burnt too high, so as to risk their discovery. But it did very well, for the stones were large, and the heavy clouds kept the smoke down, and, indeed, made new clouds of it.

One of them stamped with his foot, and ground his teeth, as the smoke got into his eyes: "Wedi-go, this is a dog's life."

"The devil fetch them all!" answered the one addressed.

"Three hundred thousand times over!—the Mark-graf, the dogs, the hunting-horns! That the fiend should just have sent them across our way!"

"I said it would be so, Buffo."

"Himmel tausend kreuz Element. For this

trumpery! One's good name, one's honour, and one's——"

Buffo felt at his neck.

"The iron-handed never allows a joke," said Wedigo; and Buffo employed himself in stamping with his steel-clad foot the scattered wares, and kicking them about disdainfully.

"Such trumpery! Braces, caps, ribbons for some peasant churl's sweetheart! Saint Maurice! for such as this! I don't like cursing, Wedigo, but may the holy donner-wetter, with nine thousand flames of brimstone light upon them! Come, lend a hand here. Into the fire with the rags! It disgusts me to look on them."

"It will disgust you more to smell them. Let it alone, Buffo. The smoke would smother us, and do no good. What is done cannot be undone."

Buffo threw himself down again, and bit his lips. "That's just it. Never did such a thing happen in my life. Five-and-thirty years and a half old am I. Here have I been careful, like a snail in a house, like a hedgehog, these two years, ever since this iron-handed fellow has been in the land. The chances that I have let slip! A caravan of Frankfurt people, packed high, six wagons, enough to make one's mouth water, and I with twelve armed men on the hill, and the cowardly villains frightened—I

heard their teeth chattering, wouldn't have waited the first attack, just as if the heavenly powers had sent them to my hand. My cousin, Gerhard, was mad. What good will it do me that I said no? And now to be tempted by this beggarly trash—rags not even fit for a nobleman's back——”

“I was against it, Buffo; it was you talked me over.”

“It was the devil—it was not I. That's how the fiend has power, laying snares in an honest man's way when he least suspects it. Oh, it was absurd, scurvy, stupid! Wedigo, if we get out of this, the thought of it will haunt me as long as I live—a disgrace that no confession will heal, no absolution wash away. I to dirty my honest hands in this way! One minute, and the work of years thrown away. There is something wrong about that water. The Vandal pagans threw their idols into it, when our forefathers came into the country. They haunt it at night. Good men are not fond of going near it. The devil, I tell you, the devil incarnate talked us into this.”

“Then it was out of your mouth that he spoke, Buffo. But what you said seemed reasonable enough.”

“I know that I had an itching in my fingers, a sort of tickling in my toes, not to let the gawkey go scot free, going so recklessly without escort,

weapon, or defence—not a soul to see us, just as if in defiance of us. One looked so small to one's self, to let a thing of that sort pass ; that's the way the Devil tempts honest people."

" You should have hit him on the head rather harder."

" I didn't want to dirty my hand. But if I catch him again ! Such men as we ! for a mean man like that—and just now ! It's enough to drive one distracted !"

Wedigo leant his head on his hand, groaning out, " It's too late, Buffo ; the Nürnberg people never hang anybody, or they would have had him before now."

" It will be a pretty business now," continued Buffo, in his self-accusation—" a different sort of hunt. Mordio ! just when we were about to halloo our dogs upon those town rats—just when a true nobleman's heart might be beating for joy, this cursed thing must happen ! What have I done to deserve it ? Two years, and scarcely lifted my hand. The Mark-graf nodded to me confidentially, took me into his council ; there I was, ranking with the high-nosed Franconian nobles ; they could say nothing against me but what they got back again ; they began to have respect for me. And now to spoil all for these trashy rags !"

" Buffo, take my word it's not good to appear

otherwise than one is; there's many an one of us has disliked it of you. Their backs are pliable, ours are straight; our faces are as God made them, theirs as the Prince makes them. Do you know why we are in this straight?"

"Cease talking, if you cannot tell us how to get out of it."

"Because we deserted Koepkin in his necessity. That's why the Devil looked over our shoulders."

"Hush about Koepkin."

"If he had been with us he wouldn't have feared to dirty his hands, he would have given the villain a stab in his neck that would have made him forget to rise up again—a stone round his neck, into the lake with him, not a sparrow would have chirped. This has befallen us because we broke good companionship. Zarnekow is safe by this time, and here are we in the mud."

"There's some witchery in it," said Buffo, after a pause; "I will not be convinced otherwise. We who know the forest inside and outside, to miss our way through a bit of a snow fall. We should have been beyond Tegel before cockerowing, and just when the clock struck four to come out at Pletzen-water. Then this business, and then to miss our road again! Five hours backwards and forwards, and then the Kurprince's hunt to come

across us! Why should they be hunting this ground to-day exactly?"

"I have always had a great respect for witches," answered Wedigo, "since once as a boy I ran after one with the other boys, and pelted her with stones and mud. The grooms and servants all ran together, and as the younker was doing it, they thought they might; and they managed it so that the old woman lay there, and three days after she was buried. But as long as ever I live I shall never forget the look she cast out of her red eyes. It was but a week, and the small-pox came into the village; seventeen children it took away, and I should have gone too, if my mother had not taken a pilgrimage to the holy sepulchre. But there has been no witchery here, Buffo; it was the heavy cart and the lame beast that we had to drive with us like two flayers' servants."

"Lower, lower!" cried Herr Buffo; "if any about the court had seen us then! I never will go on this sort of chase again—I swear it by the blessed Virgin!—without at any rate having a servant with me."

"He couldn't have got the beast faster on."

"If it had only struck you sooner to see what it was we had got—such frippery as that!—two noble knights! Oh, ye heavenly intercessors!"

“And not a bit through one’s teeth,” said Wedigo, “for twenty hours; and those cursed crows overhead, always sure of something, making fun of us!”

“Is my stomach less empty than yours? But it is the disgrace, the disgrace which gnaws the most.”

The older and more corpulent of the two got up, as if some new idea had awoke him from his quiescence, and away he went to the cart. His expectation was not deceived, for with an exclamation of joy, he held up a piece of barley-bread, and a bone of mutton already picked; but neither of them took time to consider what state it was in. They fell on it with ravenous hunger, and the morsel was enough to drive away serious thoughts for as long as there was anything left on the bone.

Wedigo laid him down again—what could he do better? but Buffo was beholding a sight which, if it had been in his nature, might have taken away his appetite. The poor beast had sunk down under the loaded and broken cart, and it lay groaning, and bleeding, and casting its eyes about, as if to look for some one to put it out of its misery. It is not to be supposed that Herr Buffo felt the feeling which we call pity; it was only as all the rest was, an annoyance to him. The dying beast was too

close to him, and he couldn't get away, nor the beast neither, notwithstanding all his attempts with his spurs to get it up.

"Who will rid us of the beast?"

"What do I care about the beast?"

"It might betray us if the dogs come near—smoking blood is the closest scent of anything. We must give him a finishing blow."

"Send for the knacker, Buffo."

"Hell and the Devil, but it must be done!—the beast will be for ever dying. What do you say?"

"I have nothing to say."

"But I say, Wedigo, necessity has no laws: one of us must do it or both of us."

"I!" cried the other; "blessed Virgin! I do it! I should not have been ashamed to have given that villain of ours a poke with my good sword; for what is a sword for, and how should I know where it falls; but carrion is another thing, rather too bad for good steel."

Buffo was on his feet: "I'll do it; give me your blade."

Wedigo, however, clasped the handle of his sword with both hands: "Buffo, are you mad? I'll sooner break it than lend it for such a purpose!"

Buffo gave vent to a huge oath, which was

fortunately indistinctly uttered. He drew his sword, as if in haste, with the words, "What must be, must be; it's all one when one has gone so far!"

Wedigo shuddered as the knight finished the work of death with a very few heavy strokes; the poor beast stretched itself out, and its sorrows were soon ended; a stream of blood coloured the ground, and ran even into the fire, where it hissed and evaporated in a vaporous smoke. Wedigo seemed about to prevent the deed; but at the moment a something came to his ear that deprived him of the power of motion—a sound of horns mingled with the baying of hounds. Buffo also heard it, and crouched low behind the walls of stone.

"Wipe the blood off your blade," whispered Wedigo. "God help us!"

"The devil is here already!" said Buffo.

"Do you meditate resistance?"

"It would be foolish," answered Buffo, after a moment's consideration; and he busied himself drawing his sword along the moss. "Though we should perhaps do well to sell our lives as dear as possible, rather than give ourselves up like silly sheep, and walk quietly to heaven up the ladder which the Kurprince will graciously conduct us to."

"God of mercy! he'll not do that—noblemen and Christians as we are."

“ I wouldn't trust his iron face.”

“ For such a trifle—such a low mean beggar-man?—not worth three guilders !”

“ He put a nobleman in the tower who had done nothing ; he had only slain a Jew who had cheated him.”

“ Well, then, there's an end of the world !” sighed Wedigo ; but it was with no small pleasure that he heard the sound of the chase, which had come tolerably near, gradually grow more distant, and at last die away altogether.

“ The world will not be at an end quite so soon, it seems,” said Buffo, who had also been listening breathlessly. “ There will be a few good pushes yet, and let him who does not stand strong look out. When one prop fails, one must look for another. Our old castles of tile, and clay, and piles, are worth nothing now ; but the princes build their houses of different stuff, and we nobles must see how we can manage to get a corner in them.”

“ But our liberties ?”

“ A prudent man will always have liberty enough.”

“ Crouching slaves we shall be !”

“ There will always be some one at the bottom. But who can tell,” continued Buffo, with a contemptuous chuckle, “ whether or not such as we

may not become very genteel slaves, if we only manage well? We mustn't, to be sure, go out on the high-roads; but these full-pursed town pedlars, these rank-grown mushrooms, will have to pay customs to us yet. Delicately, good cousin; it must be managed delicately."

"Get us delicately out of this," interrupted the elder one. "All that will not do us much good, and we swinging at the end of a rope."

"We are fast at present."

"What is the good of repeating that?"

"The Prince's hunt will spread from Spandow to Bötzwow. There is no way over the Havel, nor any boats except at Tegel, where the court will dine; and then, on the other side, there are the pack out of Berlin, as the slate-quarrier told us; all along the banks of the Spree is beset, and in like manner the road to Bötzwow; and they will rouse up here, too, there is little doubt of that. So we have but the choice of two things: to break through—cursed hard it will be, particularly as there are two of us; or else climb up a tree, and wait till nightfall. How do you like the thought of that?"

"I get up a tree! What are you talking about, Buffo?"

"Better get up a tree than up the ladder."

"And the horses get up too?"

"The horses; you are right, they would betray

us ; every child knows my horse. So you think we should break through ?—very well. You will be responsible ; you are the oldest, and should know the best. Only remember, my horse is the speediest. You are a good man, but in the flight from Angermunde you could not keep up.”

“ How do you mean break through ? Sheer madness ! ”

“ Yes, two of us together. It would be the wisest for one of us to try it alone ; he will have to risk his hide, but he will see how things stand, and what the chances are. If one of us goes, the other will be saved ; and who can tell in what way he may be able to help the other. Let us draw lots, Wedigo.”

Wedigo scarcely knew what they were going to draw lots about, before the other had already collected some small stones into his bonnet ; but as he was about to put his hand in to draw, his companion said—

“ We are about to part, cousin. Being together is well in some cases, and to part with the best friends is necessary in others. It may be necessary that we should not even know one another. Do you understand, Wedigo ? if I am taken, what good would it do me if you were to be taken too ? And if they hang me, what would it profit me that you should swing too ? Take care of my wife, and——”

“ Holy Saviour !—don’t talk in that way !”

“ Well, truly, it is a comfort to an honest fellow to leave a friend behind, who will interest himself about his concerns, and set his character right if any attack it. By Heaven ! Wedigo, if I were to survive you, I should do it ; and I should do what I could to make the fellows who harmed you smart for it ; and, you may depend upon it, I would give my last groschen for masses for your soul. But there is another thing. Suppose they catch me when I go spying about ? They throw me into a dungeon, summon me before the green cloth, and question me about this and that. How much can a willing friend do, being at liberty ! If they suspect us, for we are cousins, neither of us must know a word about the other—that is the very first condition. Now let us draw, and—but let us swear first, that the one does not betray the other, nor inform about him, nor know anything at all of him. Swear then——”

“ But that rascal will swear that there were two of us.”

“ He will swear anything. To be sure, there were two ; but one has got away—anybody, a thief on the high-road, who led you away, I mean me. Cry vengeance on him, but don’t name me ; I mean to say, I won’t name you. Here is my

rosary, dipped in the blood of Wilsnack, let us swear upon this."

Wedigo swore as he was told to do, and drew lots in the same way, without having any clear idea of what was meant by doing either. The lot fell upon him. He looked at his companion quite stupified, and scratched his head; he was quite ignorant what to do.

"Come, get ready, cousin, you'll know best *how* to——"

"I know nothing," cried Wedigo. "How can I creep through with my fat body?"

"There's truth in that. I am thinner certainly, and of a more common size. But one must not alter a drawn lot, for it is the voice of God. It is a bad business; but if they catch me, you will have nothing to repent of."

"Donner wetter!—it's a sorry time. If it was only with the burgher pack that one had to do——"

"Yes, yes, then; but when even good noblemen will not take a nobleman's part! Well, now, if you meet the Mark-graf, you will know how to speak a proud word to him."

"No, no; a thousand times no! Do you go; I will remain here."

"Cousin, I leave you unwillingly," said Herr Buffo, after a pause, and he shook him by the

hand ; “ but you will have it so—I have said it—I will go. Think of the rope, and pray for me !”

There is no account in the chronicles of what Wedigo's thoughts ran upon after Buffo mounted his horse, and took his way towards the lake, nor is it written whether he prayed or not ; but he was not one of those who were fond of thinking, he willingly left that for others to do. There he lay at full length, his hands under the back of his head, looking up at the sky, and watching the crows. They flew nearer to him than he liked, and caused unpleasant reflections ; namely, that, under particular circumstances, creatures like them had better times of it than nobles of the purest blood ; and he began to question himself how he had deserved his hard fate, for he was a good-natured fellow at bottom, who never had done any one harm, except they had provoked him or been in his way. He had always had a sufficient reason whenever he had waylaid any one : either he was a foe, or his friend's foe, or a tradesman belonging to a town which had displeased himself or friends, or he had done something some time before which wanted squaring off. Therefore it appeared to him that he had the balance on his side, and it was hard for him to conceive that any one had a right to interfere with him. To be sure, just in this instance, there might something be said.

But he asked himself, what right or rights could a miserable wretch like that have? and wasn't it as good as a challenge to drive a cart through a wood where two knights happened to be riding, without craving their protection? What, then, could cause his heart to beat higher, now that the wind bore once more upon it the sound of horns coming nearer and nearer. As for praying, Wedigo was one who prayed to the day and hour when the priest bade him, and never but then, and not a word more than what he had by heart; but necessity can make one prayerful quite as soon as a priest. He therefore squeezed his hands together, and pattered over every prayer he knew, and invoked every saint of his acquaintance. Then he charged the devil and Buffo with having led him away so much against his will; and then he implored St. Maurice not to let a Ritter, such as he was, be ruined for such a common fellow; and then the holy St. George, to defend the honour of knighthood, and preserve a man of his rank from the rope and gallows; and he was about to pray to the holy St. Martin, but his hands unclasped of themselves, for he bethought him how the sainted knight, when met by still poorer men than Hans, had with his drawn sword divided his very own mantle with the destitute and naked.

Alas! the tones of the horn, so refreshing in the merry greenwood,—how frightful was the sound to-day!—it was like the trumpet sounding to the last judgment. And again, at a greater distance, the long straight horn of the rabble from Berlin; and worse still, the baying and yelling of the dogs here and there, right and left, both the sound and its echo. He bethought him of the day, a merry one for him and his companions, when he had hallooed the dogs on a poor wretch, and how the miserable man had writhed and struggled, and screamed; and how they had ridden up to him, cracking their whips, and setting the beasts on. The man had deserved it, for he had stolen both roast and spit from his castle kitchen. Herr Wedigo could well form an idea just now what the man had felt, and now he himself was the one deserving of it. Nearer and nearer came the braying horn, calling here and answering yonder to the shrill whistle and the neighing of horses. How the huntsmen were shouting to one another and laughing, and the howling and yelping of the hounds from the forest and from the lake grew louder and louder. The dry grass crackled; he could hear them bounding in and out, now close behind him, now before him. Already a beast stood on the height above him, with its eyes

sparkling upon him, its neck stretched out, its tongue lolling, and shewing teeth enough to pull down a boar,—a dog fierce and strong, for the very purpose of pulling him down; and now a growl, and in the next moment a dozen fierce mouths opened wide upon him.

CHAPTER VII.

A STATELY personage came riding over the heath, attended by a band of horsemen. His dress was scarcely so gay as that of many of his companions, but in height he surpassed them all, none bearing himself so knightly as he. It was the same one whom Henning had come upon near the town, and whom he had taken for the thief. The most prudent may err sometimes.

“ May it please your princely highness,” said a Ritter, dressed in hunting garb, “ the dogs are making a noise yonder towards the lake ; there is something suspicious there.”

“ Then the robbers, God willing, will not escape us,” answered the gracious Kurprince, Herr Frederick the Other.

“ It is an insolence without equal !” said one of the courtiers. “ A highway robbery ! and on the

very day, and in the very forest, in which your royal highness follows the chase!"

"A day later would have been more suitable," said the Prince, with a singular look.

His highness turned at the moment to a knight who had ridden up hastily, and seemed out of breath; he is one well known to the reader. He was scarcely dressed as beseemed a knight riding with the court, not even when engaged in the chase. His sombre-coloured doublet was unbrushed, on his bonnet he wore a hawk's feather, but one might have seen that it had only been just put on. He had his cap so closely bound round his chin, that his mouth was scarcely free. If it was because of the cold, why had he no cloak? The Prince did not require such respect from his followers as that they should go unclad, especially at a hunt in winter-time.

He therefore addressed him: "You come late, Herr Buffo Voss, and from whence? for we did not see you in Spandow, as we rode out. You come upon us as if dropped from the skies."

"Noble sir," answered the Ritter, bowing low, "it is true I was not in Spandow; but on my way from Havelland, hearing that your highness had ordered the chase in these parts, I hurried as fast as I could to the river, and found a boat, which ferried myself and my horse over. It was

the sound of the horn which fortunately guided me the nearest way into your gracious presence."

"You come to another sort of chase."

"Whatever your gracious highness undertakes is sure to happen for the best, though it does indeed cause me some surprise to see the noble huntsman's craft turned aside for a pursuit, which your highness had as conveniently committed to the charge of a gamekeeper."

"Has not the Prince the right of the chase where and how he will?"

The lords of the marches answered only by a low murmur, for they would not allow that the Prince had the right. In after days it was the cause of much misfortune, and many a quire of paper was written about it pro and con; little, however, to the advantage of the nobles—the prince's arm proved the stronger.

"The right *is* his, sirs," continued the Prince, with a firm voice, "and is there higher game than the breaker of the law, or he who seizes on rights which are not his?"

There were many who knit their brows, and but few returned altogether courtly answers. The Ritter, the same who had spoken before, said—

"God protect my lord and master, and may his princely rights be made clear to all such as at present sit in darkness."

"You bear a strange plume, Herr Buffo," said the prince, after a pause: "Truly it looks as undressed, as did our young Berlin captain's!"

"Having left my baggage on the road to Spandow, I must beg your gracious highness pardon for appearing as I am. A hawk which I shot on the other side supplied me with the feather."

"It would please us well, did you always appear as you are, and never otherwise," answered the Kurprince; and he said it, meaning it to apply to the one he addressed, and to a good many others—as many as liked to take it.

A great noise had now arisen from the side to which the huntsman had pointed. The dogs barked so loud that one could hardly hear one's own voice, and the people shouted exultingly, whilst the horns, which had been temporarily silent, now sounded forth as if the whole forest were alive. And many an ugly word was plainly shouted out, which we need not commit to paper, and the cry was, "We have him! Here he is!"

The crowd round the spot was so great, that the prince himself could not at once get a sight of the person attacked. At last, when room was made, there the man was, standing in the middle, with his arms bound behind him—a man by no means young, and by no means slender. He had a bald pate, and he stood looking most troubled, and we

may even say frightened ; and truly it was a pitiable sight to see a nobleman in such a situation, for the dogs had torn his hose and doublet, and the blood was oozing out in more places than one, whilst the crowd round him were mocking and threatening him. The dogs, to be sure, had been taken up by their keepers, but not before they had torn him a good deal ; but madder than any dog, now standing up, now crouching down, stood a man right in front of him, looking so wild and furious, that it was evident he also stood in need of a chain. He was beating his breast, clenching his fists, and grinding his teeth ; whilst out of his mouth poured an incessant volley of oaths and invectives, enough to have turned a person's head. He had got a noose, too, which he kept loosening and slackening, pointing every now and then up to the tree, at the foot of which the Ritter was standing. It was Hans Makeprang, the pedlar, who had been robbed near Pletzen water, and the bound man was the Ritter Wedigo.

It is doubtful, however, whether Wedigo did not feel better off, with Hans Makeprang skipping about before him, like a wild beast in a cage, than he did when the circle opened, and before him appeared the Mark-graf, on horseback, fixing on him his stern, chilling look. If the blood had before rushed

to his cheeks, it now sank into his very toes, and he stood there as pale as a corpse.

A moment was passed in silence, he feeling all the time as if the prince's eye, like the carpenter's awl, was piercing deeper and deeper into his heart. He had lost all power of motion, nor could he take away his eyes.

"It is thou, then!" said the Kurprince, after a considerable pause.

Had any one offered him sacks of gold, it had been out of his power to have articulated the word, "No." Nor a "Yes," neither, could he bring out, for his tongue was dried up in his mouth. He did, however, just manage to nod his head.

Hans Makeprang now broke loose again, and like a man drunk with wine, whose tongue is beyond command: "Yes, he it is, the godless ruffian!—the savage pagan manslayer! Dare you deny it? Maria, mother of God—holy saints—it is he! He got hold of me here by the neck!—he drove his spurs into my sides here!—here are his spurs, spike-rowels. I will swear it by the holy blood of Zehdenik and Wilsnack! Do you deny it? Oh, mercy upon the poor trading-man! Oh, make him pay me to the last farthing! Yes, there it all is, lying trodden in the mud. Oh, the ravens shall pay you for it! I'll hold the ladder for him. And

they've stuck my beast ; it cost me a score of gro-schens, as true as my name is Hans Makeprang !”

“ Silence, dog ! his highness speaks ! Don't you hear !” cried one of the foresters, dragging the furious man roughly away.

“ It is thou, then, who hast broken the prince's peace,” said the Mark-graf. “ I know thee well. Hast thou anything to say for thyself. Speak !”

“ Herr——” His knees quaked under him. He felt as if he would have liked to have kneeled, but he could not.

“ I know thee well,” continued the Prince ; “ thou wert made prisoner, as a boy, at Nauen, when my father, whom God assoil, dispersed the Quitzow robber-gang. Thou tookst an oath with thy father, when ye were let go, to keep the peace, and forego all shameless thieving. Hast thou forgotten ?”

Herr Wedigo was silent as before.

“ Was the man thy foe ? Wert thou in strife with him ? God, my Saviour and Redeemer !” continued the Kurprince, “ it is too bad ! A noble, and my vassal, a man having property, to lay in wait in the night, like a miserable highwayman, for a poor wretch, and cut his throat for two gro-schens ! God of justice ! are we in a Christian land, two hours' distance from my capital and my castle—this to happen in my princely neighbourhood ! Ye good sirs, ye ancient nobles and faithful vassals,

ye Ritters who have shed your noble blood in many a combat, ye who risked your life-blood with me, your Kurprince, to chastise the fierce Hussites at Bernow, and to protect our rich cities, and our poor land, say but a word for the poor wretch there. Ye see the power of speech has forsaken him. Speak for him. Surely there will be some one as an advocate for one who has so many of kin."

The look which the prince cast around him, was indeed bitter; many hung their heads. No one spoke.

"What! so many connected by blood; so many good friends, and not one to plead. You, his brother-in-law—you, his uncle, his cousin, and no one say a word for him. Have you such horror for such shameful, paltry misdoing, that the words die in your mouths? How do I rejoice to hold rule in a land where there is such correct feeling; to stand in the midst of knights and vassals, who detest such mean deeds in their very souls! I half pity the poor wretch, who seems to have expected otherwise. Is it not so? Thou expectedst to find many intercessors. Many a one who is now silent, who before his conversion had squeezed thy hand, laughed with thee and feasted—yes, and shared. Thou standest alone there; the times are altered. Seek thee better friends."

"Friendship ceases under the gallows," said a

Ritter, who bore himself nobly, clad in velvet and costly furs. His face was plump and good humoured, and he pushed his horse, with its costly trappings, to where the prince stood, not with the air of a vassal, but rather of an equal. It was Duke Erich von Stettin, Duke of Pomerania, Stettin, and Baron Wolgast. What do you think, brother," he said, stroking his beard, "the fellow has confessed. Suppose we make quick work of it. Yonder tree is strong, and the branch high enough. Those black-feathered fellows in the boughs up yonder are waiting already."

The Pomeranian's words caused a general movement, and the words escaped Buffo, "He is a nobleman."

"And without properly constituted court," put in the old Herr Johannes, the one who had been the prince's companion to Berlin the day before.

"Oh, what! we will constitute one here," said the Pomeranian; "it will be something to see."

"Without citation," said the chancellor.

"He is there already; and though the learned judges may not like it, yet there are surely some amongst the many here who are at least 'privy.' Let us have a Vehm-gericht; we shall get through it quicker."

"Law and order, Herr," cried now many, pressing towards the Mark-graf.

"We are after game, good sirs," cried the Pomeranian, laughing, "and the rule is, not to let it go beyond the wood. We serve the wolf as he deserves, without asking how he likes it."

"Law and justice!" cried the knights, from every side.

"He shall have justice!" answered the Mark-graf, with a firm voice, and serious air; then, turning to the other, he said, "My good cousin of Stettin, you see how our nobles love law and justice; therefore it shall be, as is the custom here in the land. The pine-trees are not standing here," he added, gently, "to hang our nobles on."

"Well, only I should like to have seen us let the pack loose on him," grumbled the other, in a low tone; "it wouldn't have been a court, it would only have been good hunting sport."

"In German lands, Sir Duke," said Buffo, "it is not the custom to bait nobles with dogs."

"Oh, you only bait peasants with them!" answered the Duke; "no offence—one country has one custom, and another, another."

They were interrupted by the Kurprince, who again addressed Wedigo: "The first thing in a proper dispensation of justice is a strict inquiry. If I have heard right, thou wert not alone when the man was attacked?"

Wedigo answered very plainly, "No."

“And who was thy associate, and where is he?”

“Your Highness, he is away.”

“He left you in the scrape, all the affair upon your head? There are two divisions in the tower at Spandow—one is cheerful, for those who speak a true word; the other under the ground, with the Havel oozing into it. The last one is for evil-doers, who are stubborn, and will not answer. Who was thy companion, Wedigo?”

“He was—I did not know him; you will not find him, Herr.”

“Who was thy companion, Wedigo?”

“What does it matter, gracious sir? it was one to be sure, who has no name; for if he were a Ritter, he would not leave his friend by himself when in trouble.”

“Who was thy companion? Thou wouldst not have attacked the man but for him. Who was it who led thee on, and left thee in thy necessity? I say it for thy good, name him!”

“He may name himself! Me, sir, you may put into your tower; I have known it before now.”

And as they led Wedigo away, the Kurprince looked round the whole circle, and said, “On my honour, good gentlemen and nobles, I give him joy who has Wedigo Luderitz for a friend; he deserves the name!”

The Ritter Wedigo was led away to Spandow by four armed men, whilst the Prince and his followers rode towards the lake, and down the bank to where the Vandal village called Tegel, lay. Wedigo's horse had been given to Hans Makeprang, to put in his cart in place of his own, and the saddle too, to his great delight, though he continued cursing whilst reloading his cart. To be sure, some few of the Ritters looked sideways at him, and shook their heads. A knight's horse to be put in a cart! and the knight himself going meanwhile on foot, and to Spandow! "It's to be hoped it will suit you," said more than one, as they rode past. But Buffo laughed. "Suit him? why not? A prince's favour is like sunshine. Well for him who knows how to place himself right, and to leave the shade for others!"

Hans Makeprang was a cunning fellow, notwithstanding his being at times so violent, and almost mad. He knew what he was about; he therefore took care not to be left behind, but flogged on his horse in a way that such a well-bred steed was little accustomed to, in order to keep up with the hunting train. He arrived at Tegel at the right time, just as the gentry sat down to table, an occasion enough to tempt many curious people from the neighbourhood and the country round. These people he treated with the most awful nar-

ration of his adventure; how the Prince had taken his part, how Wedigo had been seized, and put in irons, and how he would be racked and put to death on the wheel, and many another robber noble with him; it was enough to make his listeners' mouths water. And next he produced his ribbons and stomachers, and related how that the Markgraf, and the lord of Stettin, and the Prince of Anhalt had said they might well be a temptation to highwaymen, for they had not one of them seen the like in any booths in the towns. The cloth he held in his hand had been wrapped round Wedigo's neck, and the Prince had torn it off with his own hand; this pearl clasp had been bargained for by the Duke of Pomerania; and he of Anhalt had sadly coveted the apron there for his lady. The countryfolk fell to open-mouthed, and long before the feast was broken up, Hans Makeprang had got rid of his whole stock, and a pretty handful of money in his pocket. Before it got dark, he mounted his steed quietly, left his cart for whoever liked it, and galloped away through Bötzw to Lenzen. Soon after, he sold the horse to a good knight on the Mecklenburg frontier, who did many a good day and night's work with it; for the horse knew its work—it would hold down its head like a fox, and creep along a ditch like a cat. It knew also how to cross ice, and it would swim the Elbe

with a man in harness on its back. The younker, von Oertzen, who got it afterwards from Heinrich Bülow for a debt, was so delighted with it, that he actually gave Hans Makeprang half a guilder, for which, however, the latter told him of a good thing or two, for Hans had acquaintances the country through, and was in league with the gipsies and country innkeepers, and always knew beforehand when a waggoner was to be on the road with a better load than usual. It was the best that Hans could do; he would not have done well to have shewn himself in the Mark again. What good would the Kurprince have done him if he had got a knock on his pate, or was hanging tied up by the feet.

On the spot where Hans Makeprang's cart had stood, there was afterwards a great feast. No human eye saw it; it was a sight that would not have suited the human eye. The sky was grey enough before, but now it became black; the red pine branches shook their boughs, and from every one the crows sprang up, and circled in the air, croaking, and then descended like the night upon the stones, and just as flies make a spot black where there is a drop of something sweet, so they covered the dead body of the horse with their black wings. But then came another rushing through the air, and on the highest

branches sat other birds, with crooked bills, rocking themselves; they were hawks and kites, and down they descended upon the lumps of stone close to; and the crows were restless, and fluttered backwards and forwards. But whilst they were contending, and the crows which had flown away kept coming again, scarcely giving the hawks time for their dainty meal, there might be seen two dark spots in the highest clouds; nearer they drew with immense circles, and each circle became less as they came nearer. The crows fluttered anxiously, and the hawks looked up and screamed, still unwilling to quit their food; but down came, with outspread wings, wide enough to wrap round a lamb, with glistening eyes and powerful hooked beaks, two mighty eagles. It was as if a hot stone had fallen from the clouds, hissing and glowing, raising dust and smoke and vapour where it fell. Just in such a manner they pounced down upon the carrion, beating their wings so that the grass moved and the loose snow was blown about; then they dug their claws into the body, so that it might have seemed as if the dead animal was moving again, and making efforts to get up. The crows flew croaking away, and the other birds of prey screamed, and flew here and there, ever coming again, but not venturing to approach. There was a sound and a warring in the air, and all for the carrion;

but as night approached, and the birds began to seek their nests in the hollow trunks, and the eagles, sated, flew away, bearing pieces with them, to their distant nests, then out crept the foxes, and plundered what the eagles had left. But not very long, for out of the depth of the woods came a dismal howling: all that had life was silent; nothing was heard, save the sound of long leaps in the cracking brushwood. The foxes stole away, for the wolves were there, and they tore, with frightful howlings, what the kites, and eagles, and foxes had left. When the morning came, all that was left of Hans Makeprang's horse was a few picked and broken bones. It was gone here and gone there.

On the spot where the lake makes its deepest indentation into the land—where there are many small elevations overgrown with greenwood, refreshing in the spring time, when the elder-tree blossoms—there was also a banquet held. There was plenty of noise also here, not of frightful screamings of birds, but of the trumpet and the drum, the merry forest-horn and the clanging of the wine-cup. It was a forester's feast, such as had often been held by the noble princes in these woods. To be sure, there was no castle or house to shelter the noble guests; the few fishermen's huts, with their thatched roofs, looking only like

mounds of earth, a tall German knight had not entered without stooping, which it beseemed no knight to do. But the forest-master had chosen a hollow place, and hung carpet cloths beneath six high trees, under which he had set the benches and laid out the tables. It was scarcely as neat, perhaps, as a Nürnberger would have made it, but what did it signify to people hungry from the chase, as long as the tables were well covered? and there was no lack in that respect. The Duke of Stettin was the guest in whose honour the feast was given; and the Prince of Anhalt, who was also there, was one who knew what good eating and drinking was. The tables almost broke down under the roasts which the forest had supplied, and the fish, the tribute of the lake; and the Prince's head cook, Herr Ulrich Czeuschel, had done his best to get ready his pasties and other dainty matters; though he did say, that for people of more refined appetite he could have done better; though for Pomeranians and Mark people, and particularly after the chase, it was quite good enough; the noble Kurprince himself was a very excellent man, and certainly very clever, but as to what regarded eating, he had only been born in Tangermunde; had his brother, Prince Albrecht, been there, who was one who knew more about it—if ever he should come into the Mark, he, Herr Czeuschel, would

spread him a table which he would little expect to find in this sand-hole of the Holy Roman Empire. It was a curious kitchen that the artist had for his cookery. They had dug holes in the clay, to serve for fire-places, and the pans hung and the spits turned round over them; the only chimney was the heavens above. There was a smell of roast in the forest, perceptible a quarter of a mile off, enough to make the poor people round about dream they were in heaven. All that was left was to be divided; the Kurprince had given command that nothing was to be taken back to Spandow; and, hard as it had seemed to have had to drive the game, or to stand in the water to draw the nets, there were few but wished that there was a hunt every day.

Let no one fear that the gentlemen would be starved with cold, eating as they did in the open air, though it was February. At that time the men were different, though the weather was not; besides, they had furs on, and then again his gracious highness, the Mark-graf, had taken two precautions—first, to have fires lighted all round, which made a glorious show, especially after dark; and again, that heat should be given by the rich wines of Hungary and Greece which had been sent by boat from Spandow. When the butler was asked how much had been drunk, he wouldn't tell;

and when he told the Kurprince afterwards, it startled him. "Good God! how much, then, do you reckon for each?" asked he, for he drank little himself. "Your highness," answered the butler, "we must first deduct what the Duke of Pomerania drank, and the Lord of Anhalt scarcely drank less, and then there will be as much left for each, as ever a stout Mark man can carry." The prince laughed, and said, "The next time you may let the duke have more, for Pomerania is worth it."

A good deal of paper might be filled up with an account of what was said at table, did but the chronicles inform us of it; for the lips speak as the heart dictates, and wine loosens the tongue. Still they did not give utterance to all that they thought: the Ritters because the princes were there, and the princes because of the Ritters: though the table where the princes and a few of their most faithful officers sat was somewhat higher than the others, that they might be able to speak amongst themselves, which they did, the recent adventure being the subject.

"Will you have him hung, then?" asked Herr Erich von Stettin.

The Mark-graf, who was grave beyond his years, for he was a young man, though his appearance was older, made no answer for a time. "Good

cousin," was his answer at last, "it is a most annoying circumstance."

"Not the first of the sort though, that has come before you," answered Duke Erich. "And if your father made no great work about Puttlitz and Quitzow, whom I ought to take part with, for they are friends of ours, why do you hesitate so much about hanging this one up? The justice of it is plain enough."

"This one!" said the Kurprince. "Oh, sir! were I to act whenever the justice is plain, there would be no month in the year in which I should not hang up two. Cast a look round down there, and tell me who has not deserved it. I am forced to have my eye ever open, and my hand ever ready, for if I but turn my back——"

"They recur to the time when there were no Mark-grafs in the land," said he of Stettin, laughing. "But you mean to remain."

"*I remain!*" said the Kurprince, firmly; and as if to pledge himself to what he had spoken, he lifted his goblet and emptied it.

"If your father, Herr Frederick the First, had always been here, it would have looked different. He was the man."

"Peace to the departed!" answered the Kurprince. "Each one has his duty to perform, and in performing it, no life can be too long or too

valuable. My noble father had much to do in the kingdom, and the blessing of his emperor and of the German empire descended with him to the grave. Whose blessing I may take with me, I as yet know not, cousin ; but this I know, that the duty which Providence has imposed upon me I will strive and struggle to perform."

"The nobility !" said the Duke of Pomerania, making a sign with his clenched fist under the table, as if he was pressing something forcibly down, but he took care to let no one see him, and laughed roguishly.

"I thought that that duty had been performed already," said the other, sighing.

"Don't think that, cousin ; your father mowed, but you, and your children too, will have to glean. We know what they are in Stettin, the Knights and Ritters. When you drive them out, they come over to us. Call themselves exiled—but, good heavens, they carry their necks stiff enough ! they seem to think they do us an honour in sitting down at our princely table !"

Kurprince Frederick laid his hand on the table ; meanwhile, his eye traced the groups below them : "As long as I have my eye open, cousin, they shall give honour to you and to me, and bend their necks before us, just as low as vassals should do who stand in presence of their liege lords."

"But I am not that," said the Pomeranian.

“You are a prince, and they are—but enough. Cousin, this affair, happening just to-day, annoys me. I would we had hunted in Grunewald to-day, and here to-morrow.”

“If you had not wished to see it, there was no occasion why you should.”

“The Prince may close an eye sometimes, but he must not be blind. This Wedigo Lüderitz is not one of the worst; he has done penance, and will have to do penance in the tower; but it is not the time just now to proceed to extremities.”

“I cannot deny I should have liked to have seen him swinging.”

“You shall have other things to see, I expect. These towns:—I like the towns, but their pride it is which requires the most forbearance.”

“They fought well under your father.”

“They did, cousin; but is not all that Berlin and Koeln did undone by their shutting their gates in my father’s face? Just God! the greatest prince of his day, the adviser of the empire, the peace-maker of entire Germany, the guardian of the church and her prelates, the renowned general, the saviour of the kingdom from the Bohemian heretics—these pedlars! All they did for us is undone; and our having suffered such wrong to go unrevenged these twenty years, has made the interest double the capital.”

“They have to let me into Stettin,” said Duke Erich, with a laugh. “I live there, and may the devil fetch them all if they try to hinder me ! I would let them have a few tons of scalding pitch from my citadel to cook their wives’ soup with. But, cousin, my burgesses are as great blockheads as yours are ; they swell themselves out, and think that because they have the Oder, and have ships on the sea along with the Rostockers and them of Stralsund, and because they may be able to put in a word with the old snow kings in the north yonder, that they can put in a word, too, with their own princes. It’s enough to plague me to death with their never ending complaints and wants. Holy Maria ! because they are Germans they want to be a head higher than the head that God gave them. To hear them at a diet, first one and then another ! Because my father gave them privileges, they think they have a right to everything ; and then, too, the complaints of the former inhabitants, who say they have been dispossessed and ill-treated ; and if it be so, how can I help it ? I get away when they begin about that ; I leave my chancellor to fight it out with them. But they are good fellows after all, my burgesses. The wine, cousin, that they send me up to the castle—I don’t say anything against yours, but for a Pomeranian stomach—you must come to me and taste it.”

The Kurprince seemed to have listened to every

word with great attention, but still he could not have heard the last few sentences. "Right, cousin," he said, "you hit the nail on the head. Their sailing the sea, having their own ships of war, their treaties with maritime ports,—that is the cause of the mischief. How is it to be avoided? But what does it matter? Yours are Pomeranians, mine are Mark-men. No one can serve two masters—the Hanse league and his own masters. If they want our protection, we must have their obedience."

"That is what Albrecht Glinde, my burgomaster, says," said Herr Erich. "But the others say I shouldn't believe him. He is a Brandenburger, and what he says, is, they say, for your advantage. Well, that will all have to be settled in Wittstock, so it is no good bothering one's brains about it to-day."

"Yes, in Wittstock! I drink, cousin, to a good understanding among the princes there," interrupted the prince, speaking hurriedly (it would have appeared as if he did not want to protract the conversation about Albrecht Glinde); "but, I tell you, the princes must hold together; by our God and Saviour, the princes must make alliances; they must be willing to stand by one another; they are the chain which must hold the commonwealth together; they must become stronger and more powerful in these northern coast lands; they

must put their powers together and use them, or else the holy Roman-catholic empire will fall in pieces here."

And he continued, whilst Herr Erich again drained his goblet: "The towns do not do it, nor yet the leagues; they are good materials for the powerful to work with, and as long as they are industrious and orderly, they bring advantage to a country. But a town consists of many heads, and there is no one amongst them to look higher and further than the rest. Each one looks at his neighbour's wall, and never a one over the roof. Of what avail are these leagues? As long as the princes were away and weak, it was well, they protected one another; but how can the lame and blind protect themselves now? That is what the princes are for, for they can see further, and have a stronger arm. But why should one of my towns, one of which I am the guardian, enter into league with other towns, which are mine also? I am the bond which binds them; I am there to see which has too much and which too little. Away with their leagues! But still more, I ask, what have my towns to do with towns which are not mine, which belong to other masters, or to the empire? It will not do, cousin; it is a chain pulling one way and another, fettering my princely arm; that chain I am about to break asunder."

“It is a confounded long one,” said Duke Erich, filling and emptying another goblet.

“What is a chain when one link is broken in pieces? The Hanse league may remain whole, I have nought against it; but my towns I will break loose.”

Herr Johannes the chancellor made a sign to the Kurprince, pointing to the Pomeranian. It was as much as to say, that the Duke was thinking more of the wine than of the discourse. He was, perhaps, afraid that his lord in his zeal might speak too loud, so that one or another might hear what was not intended for them.

But just then the duke pushed the flagon towards the Mark-graf: “We will drink to Wittstock, and that we have good agreement there. Agreement, cousin, but no oath of fealty. Pomerania is free. I grant you the towns—separate them or bind them as it suits you; in Wittstock the rest. Cousin, your wine is right good.”

Prince Frederick smiled: “Then, in Wittstock. Who can tell, cousin, when the others bring much good counsel, if I may not bring more.”

“As it pleases you. The wine is good; I drink to you.”

“And to every just design,” said the Prince of Anhalt.

“Oh! that afterwards,” cried the Pomeranian.

“But before all else, your worthy lady, who is looking at us from Spandow, over yonder.”

They drank together and laughed, for the princess would have needed good eyes to have seen them, for Spandow, though its towers might be discovered across the water, was at least five miles distant. It was possible that when it became darker she might see the fires.

“You have sent a good roast to her ladyship,” said Herr Erich, whose face became every minute redder and his tongue looser. “Is that the custom here? With us we send what the thief took, not the thief himself.”

And he began to tell merry tales of hunts and other things, and many Pomeranian adventures which were unfit for lady's ear. The table began to get too small for him, so he shouted down to the lower tables, and the merriment became universal. Prince Frederick laughed too, but as one who does it for companionship's sake, and not of his own accord.

“You have no taste for this,” he whispered quietly to his chancellor. “It is a melancholy thing when the princes do not know their responsibility; and how are we to act that a burgher may know what a prince really is?”

“Your Highness,” answered the chancellor, in the same tone, “if every prince in the German

Empire would be a prince, still there would be not one such as you would have him. There would be as many as there are heads in a German town. There are many limbs to a body, yet but one head. Many, therefore, must be but limbs who now think themselves heads; there must be but one head."

"The Emperor!" said the Kurprince, in deep thought.

"That head goes a wandering, and scarcely belongs any more to the body. The Emperor sits in his kingdom, first depending on Rome, and anxious now lest they displace him. In our land, where the sun of heaven shines but dimly, the sun of earthly majesty shines yet dimmer. In these countries a power is wanted which they may comprehend, and know, and have affection for. They want a native prince, one to weave a majesty about his princely head, that these parts may be no longer the scorn and the ridicule of the empire.

As the Prince was silent, the chancellor continued—"I, as a good Mark-man and your grace's faithful vassal, can hardly wish that the Princes of Mecklenburg and Pomerania were such as I have described;" and he went on to say many things about the great meeting of princes at Wittstock, when the old quarrel about hereditary succession and feudal right was to be considered. "On that

account," said the chancellor, in conclusion, "I think it the best that we should gain the Mecklenburgers and Pomeranians to our side, and then we may——"

"No, Johannes," the Kurprince said, interrupting him; "let us first be lords in our own land, and then as God will. Let him who would heal others, first take heed that he be whole himself."

They might have talked to each other as loud as they liked—the others could not have heard them; a great tumult and noise, shouting and pushing, had begun, and many were unwilling to leave the tables now that the servants came to move them away. Among the crowd, the eye of the Kurprince fell upon one who was gazing about him with open eyes: the Prince called to mind who he was, and indeed had resolved to send for him sooner, only he had forgotten. Great people have no account to render to any one.

"Well, you young knight of the bloody wing, named Henning Mollner, if I recollect right, have I redeemed my word? The Kurprince has joined the chase. Though he did detain you, and lead you astray, you see it is all right now."

"But you have taken the robber away from before his nose," said he of Anhalt, who had heard his history. "What will the lad have to take to

Berlin with him now? He hoped to make his entry with fife and trumpet, the robbers bound behind him."

"Verily and indeed you are right, cousin—I have robbed the poor youth."

"Perhaps of the best thanks of his dearly beloved," said the Prince of Anhalt.

"Have you one?" asked the Kurprince; and the courtiers laughed merrily, for the youth stood before them embarrassed, which was far from his usual wont, and blushing, not able to articulate a word.

"You have robbed both him and his sweetheart!" cried he of Anhalt.

"I will give thee something in Spandow to give to her," said the Kurprince. "You must accompany us thither, that I may shew my lady Princess one who is harsher against misdoers than even I, and had nearly seized me for one. Is it not too bad, you sirs?"

And they all laughed merrily.

"Tell your lady-love," continued the good Prince, "that you took the Mark-graf for a highwayman, and what he gave you was for his ransom."

And forthwith the noble gentlemen betook themselves to their boats, which were in waiting to take them to Spandow. Some few did not take

their places, but were put into them by others, particularly the Lord of Stettin, whom they covered with furs without his knowing it: he was not cold either. He knew first where he was when he awoke in his bed at Spandow. But it was a merry sight to see the four boats upon the lake, all with torches and music. They who remained behind shouted long life to them, and threw the planks, and ropes, and dry weed into the fire, so that it blazed up, and could be seen by the boats from far. When they reached the middle of the lake, salvos were fired from the great piece of artillery which they had got upon the wall of Spandow. The Italians had forged it, and it made a tremendous noise. It was let off thrice, and then the music struck up again, and continued with piping and drumming till the Kurprince and his guests set foot on ground, and betook them to the proud castle of Spandow.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was the evening of the Sunday called Estomihi, and the storm was howling and driving the snow in whirlwinds along the Jews' quarter. It was not weather to turn a dog out of doors into, and all who could get fuel heaped it on their house fires. God have mercy upon the poor ! But there was a good deal of forest round Berlin, and the quality people were not particular about a stick, more or less, such as the unfortunates could get into their houses after dusk, that they might have warmth. In the Jews' quarter, the stoves crackled, the chimneys smoked, and the cooks roasted and baked, so that a savoury odour was diffused through the houses, whilst the housewives bustled about as housewives should, calling out to and sometimes scolding their handmaids, who, how-

ever, laughed behind their backs, and did as they liked after all.

In no house were the shutters so closely fastened as in the one at the corner, where Joel Baruch lived. The chinks had been stuffed with moss, and straw mats were hung behind them, either as a guard against the weather, or against the intrusive eye of the curious. A lamp, diffusing a pleasant light over the chamber, hung from the beam overhead; but a still greater light was thrown from the fire blazing in a huge stove. Round it sat the family, consisting of the mother, and one or two elderly women, two or three young maidens with white skins and red cheeks, hair as black as the raven, and eyes as black as coals. Four or five young men, with just such hair and eyes, were sitting or standing about, joking with the maidens, and saying so many sweet and merry things to them, that the servants were in a continual chuckle. Nobody seeing these lads in the day time would recognise them again now; to see them then creeping along the streets barefoot and in rags, pale and hungry-looking, a few hare-skins over their shoulders, making way for whomsoever they met, and standing still and doffing their caps whilst such went by. But now they held themselves up, and their eyes sparkled, and one could see no sign of paleness or misery in their faces.

Was it the reflection of the fire which coloured them so highly, or the neighbourhood of the pretty girls who sat with them, or what was it?

The fun was going on like rounds of musketry; one word followed the other, for the young men were relating all that had passed to their pretty cousins; and curious enough it was—who would have thought it—one of the lads acted the burgo-master, another Herr Mathis Blankenfelde, and another shewed exactly how Pawel Strobant rushed to the front of the barber's booth, and just what a face he made when the stone hit him. Another took the character of Henning Mollner, and the way he imitated the young man's bold and confident air seemed to give him such perfect satisfaction, that he could not leave off. The girls, too, enjoyed it so heartily, that they made him do it over and over again; and what pleased them most were the witty and merry remarks which he had made to the ladies at Thomas Wync's banquet, for it was Henning who had got in there in a harlequin's dress. Then, too, the whole history of the quarrel of Elizabeth with Eva, and how Henning had broke into the senate-house to get the necklace, only escaping being taken for a thief by luckily finding the provost under a table.

So merry was the narration, and so good was the imitation of the different people, that the

servants could have listened the whole night ; but they were forced to speak in a low tone, and keep very quiet, because Joel Baruch sat beside his writing-table, reckoning and casting up his accounts. Every now and then, when the noise was too great, the mother would lift up her finger, and point to him ; he himself had to turn round more than once, and correct them for their foolishness.

“ What is the reason,” he said, shutting his large book, “ that ye go to-day dressed as becomes not the children of your fathers ? It is the Christian’s sabbath,—not ours.”

“ No one will see them,” said the mother, as the girls crouched down behind the stove, laughing slyly, for they knew that they had always an advocate in their mother.

“ It is not seemly,” continued the old man, “ that the children of their fathers should put on the garments of Gojim, and imitate their festivities. No wall is so thick but it has holes and chinks ; and even though no Christian eye beholds us, yet it will be seen of the God of Israel, who spoke to our fathers, saying, ‘ Thou shalt have no God besides me.’ ”

Just then, a dreadful gust of wind came down the chimney, blowing the sparks from the fire into the room, and causing the flame itself to come out of the stove-door ; a shutter and a window-pane

were blown in, and the snow came driving into the room. The howling and whistling continued some moments as if the world were at an end; the Jewesses were affrighted, and even the young men turned pale. The mother clasped her hands, and Joel Baruch did the same, sinking also on his knee, first, however, closing the shutter again, and making it secure with an iron bolt.

And just now, when everything had become quiet, and each was whispering a prayer against storm, they heard a low knocking at the door. The burgher's bell had long struck, and after that no Jew dared to go out; indeed, who would wish to be out in weather such as that? They all listened, and there came another knocking—low, but distinct enough.

“Don't open the door, Joel,” said the mother, trembling, as Joel stood up; but he only locked the drawer of his cabinet, and listened attentively, while his eye followed the shadows thrown by the light of the lamp.

“Don't open, father!” cried the girls, “they will be pursuers.” “That's just the way the Vehmrichters knock! May God preserve us!” said another; and the youngest whimpered, “That's the way the Schlemihl knocks at a house-door.”

Baruch shook his head: “The Vehmrichters will not knock at a Jew's door; and pursuers do

not creep, like the fitchet, to the dove-cote; and the Schlemihl does not knock and ask for admittance, he comes like the worm in the pear fruit, and one sees him first when he has gone out. Open, Rachel, and let the stranger in."

They all trembled sadly, cowering together, and they begged and implored him, as he valued his safety and theirs, not to open. He, however, motioned them away with his hand: "Do you not hear, Rachel? I say, the third time, open the door."

And they begged now that they might all go to the door with him; and the young men took the lights, and such sticks and weapons as they could lay hold of. But he ordered them to go quickly to their rooms, and shut themselves closely in, and remain quiet, and by no means to listen.

"Who would come creeping to a Jew's house? Not he who would do him an injury, nor one who would be heard and seen of others. It is one who is in want of something, and privately too, that he may conceal it even from his own shadow." This he said to his wife, when the others had got away; and he then murmured to himself, "He who would drive away the guests who come to us thus, would drive gain from our doors, for by daylight there is no road to the Jew's house."

Rachel, his wife, had now opened the door, with

fear and trembling, and taken the man who stood outside, who was wet and whitened over with snow like a stone statue, by the arm, and had led him along the dark passage, without saying a word, to where Baruch stood at the room-door; she then took herself noiselessly away, and Baruch bowed low before his unknown guest, for the man was wrapped in his cloak, and his bonnet was drawn over his face. He led him silently into the room, and then carefully closed the door.

The stranger had approached the fire, to shake the snow off and warm himself, but he did not discover his face; even when asked, with a low obeisance, if he would not take off his cloak, he made a motion to the contrary. Baruch approached near, and whispered, "Herr, you whose foot has honoured my threshold, and to whom I give honour as is your due, the door is locked, the shutters are closed, no eye can see you here, nor any ear hear you, save that of your servant Baruch."

The stranger covered his face deeper in his mantle: "Dost thou know me?"

"I do know you," answered Baruch; "but I shall know you no more when your foot hath trod outside my door. I will sweep the dust from the planks, that none may see your footsteps, and clear away the snow which your foot has trodden. Ba-

rich's house is like a grave for what he hears, and his memory is like a sieve, when he sees again the Christians who have visited him."

The stranger threw off his cloak, and Baruch bent lower than he had done before, as he saw the Burgomaster of Berlin, Herr Johannes Rathenow, standing before him.

"Art thou surprised to see me in thy house?"

"Herr, it is your house, if you will it so."

"My house!" said Herr Rathenow, and he looked round with a shudder. He was not ill, but his face was pale, and there was an air of sadness over it.

"Why should a poor Jew be surprised, Herr? He has no right to be surprised, nor yet to rejoice; he is just whatever the powerful gentlemen would have him be; and what they would have him do, that he does."

He fetched an arm-chair out of a corner. On Herr Johannes turning away unwillingly, he continued—

"You can sit down on this chair, Herr, without shame or danger. Many a gentleman has sat on it, who no one would have thought had ever knocked at a Jew's door. By the God of my fathers, never a Jew sat him on it!"

Something like a smile might have been seen to flit across his features as he said this, and he now

pulled the cover hastily from the leather cushion, and drew himself back into a corner, whilst Herr Johannes sat down. What could be worse than to sit on a chair whereon a Jew had sat, or pace backwards and forwards under a Jew's roof? He sat for a moment silent, thinking of many things, and it was easily discernible how difficult he found it to make a commencement.

“Dost thou know why I have sought thee?”

“Because it were not suitable, in either town, that a Jew should tread the threshold of one of the powerful; the people would ask, ‘What does he want a Jew for?’”

“Baruch, thou knowest!”

“It cannot be because the senate would forbid the Jews to purchase beasts. We may buy none, now, but what the butchers leave. It cannot be about the tax, for the senate would send the bailiff, and not the burgomaster; nor can it be——”

“Enough, Baruch; thou art rich.”

“God of my fathers! I—and rich! Yes, if it had not been for the layings in wait, and the prosecutions, the dogs and the funeral piles under Louis, whom they call the Roman. They burnt my grandfather, and they strangled my grandmother with a pitch twine. God of Israel! they had lost all their own children in the plague, and yet they had poisoned the wells and brought the pestilence

to the land! Only one child was saved, and carried into the woods—my father. And since the restoration——”

“There have been many rich years, and your lean kine have fed themselves fat again. Silence, Jew!—the people murmur.”

“The noble gentlemen in the senate will surely not listen to the people’s grumbling.”

“If ye are reasonable, and yield what justice requires of ye, and are not proud, as your fathers were! That was why the pursuers came. The bad times may come again. Baruch, thou art rich.”

“Most reverend, most merciful sir; by starving and enduring want, and keeping close together all I have earned by sweat and toil, it may be that others are poorer than old Baruch.”

“When the senate bought the great annuities, thou biddedst four hundred marks. Peace! what avails it to talk? I am in want of a sum of money, for which thou shalt have security and take interest, as does a Jew,—if thou knowest how to be silent, and gettest me the money before the cock crows,” he added, in a lower voice.

Baruch murmured something to himself, counting on his fingers: “Before the cock crows, reverend sir?—it is a large sum.”

“What is?”

“Forty-seven score groschens.”

“Jew!” broke from the burgomaster’s lips; and he raised himself up in astonishment: “what dost thou mean with thy forty and seven score groschens?”

“For which you came to my poor house,” said Baruch, still in the same attitude. He stood as before, humbly in the corner, peeping out of his eyes at the burgomaster, who allowed his head again to sink on his hand, careful to conceal the effect which the other’s words had had upon him.

“Yes, just about—forty or fifty.”

“Fifty,—it is a great sum,” and he looked at him even more cunningly. “And forty-seven is a great sum too—too much for one who owes it, and has not got it. In other places, the senate pays its master’s debts, and not the burgomaster the debts which are the senate’s.”

The burgomaster saw that Baruch knew more than he ought to know. He cast an angry look at him, and said, “Hold thy tongue; ’tis not for thee to question the senate’s purposes.”

“Who dares presume to do that, reverend sir? Do not we live in the breath of its favour, and when the breath is withdrawn we die? But forty-seven score in these bad times—and Mollner must

have the money to-morrow. Well, but he might wait—the young man—as long as the burgomaster pledges himself for it.”

“ In a word, Baruch, thy conditions ? ”

“ Yes—conditions to a noble gentleman, and to the master who is above the noble gentlemen. He used to be such a fine gentleman—Herr Schumm, I mean, in Friar’s-street—he sits him down on his money-bags, and to leave an old friend in difficulty for seven and forty score groschens ! ”

The most painful journey that the burgomaster had ever taken had been to the Jew’s house, to beg money from a man whose hand he would shudder to touch ; and now that he was in it, the chair in which he sat seemed to him like the dock in which the prisoner stands before his judge.

“ Baruch, I have need of the money.”

“ Money ! When I remember the great Herr Albertus ! He was like a lord of glory, and had seven and forty horses in his stables ; and now, his grandson to enter a Jew’s house for forty and seven score groschens ! Oh, thou just God ! And to have no more friends—the Rathenows ! It is not the first time—to be sure, to be sure. The senate, the day before yesterday,—who would have thought it ? ”

“ What, Jew ! ” Herr Johannes actually shook upon his chair.

“ But the Wyns—the rich house of Wyns,” continued Baruch, “ have money to lend upon good security. And they are so rich—have their estates at Frankfort, and in the rich Oder valley, their barns and their boats full of fat things, and have ever been friends of the Rathenows—not even seven and forty score groschens to a friend !”

“ Miserable wretch ! whence hast thou that ?” cried the burgomaster, and he sprang up amazed. The colour had left his face, and his eyes stared at the old man as if he had beheld a spirit. How could the Jew know of what had passed that very morning between two people in a closed room ? Herr Johannes, since we saw him last, when ill, had had his troubles ; props, upon which he had built, had broken—friends deserted him. With what indignation he had answered the writing sent him from the senate, purporting that he should not pay Henning Mollner as he valued the esteem of the senate : “ I will and shall pay him, ‘ though the senate of both towns stand on their heads !’ ” And just then his servant to come back from Friar’s-street, every child knowing what Bartholomew Schumm had shouted from his window to his eternal dishonour. Alas ! much had taken place ; how are we to tell it all ? So much talking and writing backwards and forwards, and angry blood, and busybodies running here and there, telling

what one had said, and another had said, but the thing never coming to the ears of the third and fourth as the first and second had said it. Herr Johannes was not one to pay attention to every scandalous report; but at a time when one is irritated and thinking the worst, one is apt to lend an ear to lying tongues. And it may have been that he gave offence to many a one who meant him well; and that is what few can forgive, when what they have done has been from a good motive. And how could he help smiling approvingly when they brought him word, that in every room and cellar in the town there was a talking against the senate, and that they were praising him? Of course, what pleased him displeased the senate; and many a one who had been a friend took offence, and did not visit him.

The two brothers, the Wyls, who made a point of never quarrelling with anybody, were just the only ones who could put in a good word and talk of conciliation. But what could they do? Herr Dietrich thought about nothing but the ladies' favour, and how he should tie his cravat so as to astonish everybody. He went to sleep whenever there was a long session. Thomas Wyls was a very first-rate gentleman; but he always failed in having the last word, and never carried anything through. When Johannes Rathenow's enemies told

him in the senate that he ought to consider the absence of the burgomaster from his banquet as a deliberate insult, he believed it so for the time; but the next time he saw the burgomaster, Herr Johannes could turn him altogether round, and send him back quite full and overflowing with what he was to say to the senate. But when he got to the Long Bridge, it never came out the same, and even sometimes otherwise, for he let them frighten him. Meanwhile, the day was approaching on which the payment to Henning Mollner had been promised, and Herr Johannes, difficult as it must have been to him, had gone to Thomas Wyns, and asked him for the loan of the money. The poor man could not bring out half sugared words enough,—how cheerfully, how gladly he would have done it, but Herr Johannes must himself be aware that all his available property was afloat on the Oder. The perspiration was standing thick on his forehead for very anxiety. He was afraid of the senate, for he knew why Herr Johannes wanted the money; and how could he, as an honest man, conceal what he had done? But then, again, what a nice pickle he would be in if he offended Herr Johannes, who was a man who could speak when there was occasion, and before whose eye many a one had cause to quail; and well might he pity the man standing before him,

choked with vexation, so as to be incapable of uttering a word; and, without speaking, Johannes took himself away, though Thomas Wyns was positively outdoing himself in polite phrases and expressions of regard, and walked backwards to conduct him down stairs, accompanying him to the door,—yes, and three paces beyond it. The burgomaster, however, took not the least notice of him. So poor Herr Wyns shrugged his shoulders, and said to himself—“A man who is integrity itself, but how can he ever make a friend as he goes on?” But he bore him no grudge in his heart, for Herr Thomas was a man of a truly easy, good disposition.

The burgomaster, as we said before, had started to his feet, and was casting a piercing look at the Jew, but one mingled with fear and aversion, just as a lion might regard a snake looking out at him with its little eyes. One tread were enough to crush it, but where his foot had fallen the creature would have slid away, and its eye be looking from somewhere else. The Jew bent himself lower, but not less keen was his glance than before:

“The worm, worshipful sir, which the foot of man would tread upon, crouches itself into a crevice, and the little mice have holes in the palaces of kings. What do the princes care for

the mouse hearing what the mighty say? the people do not hear it."

"Jew, thou knowest more than thou shouldst know; but be it so. He who has done thee the honour to enter thy house, the head of these two towns, is in necessity, deserted of his friends, and his word of honour pledged to be redeemed to-morrow. Now, dost thou hear; thou hast one before thee before whose face thou tremblest, who hast but to make a sign, and thou wert beaten, and spurned from the gate by the foot of the beadle; one who has power to tear down thine house, and bring misfortune upon thy head and on the heads of thy children's children. And this one thou hearest asketh it of thee; he is obliged to ask it; his friends have sent him to the Jew."

"Must I pay it, Herr, lest at your wink I be beaten and spurned from the gate by the foot of the beadle; lest my house be torn down, and misfortune be brought upon me and upon my children's children?"

"No," cried Johannes Rathenow, "by the righteous God, I do not threaten thee!"

"Shall I pay it because I feel for your necessity? What feeling has a Jew a right to have? If I had the feeling you would spit on it."

"Thou needst neither fear nor yet feel, thou

hast but to reckon. Take interest as much as thou art allowed; and if that be not enough for thee, take double, take treble. My honour is at stake; nothing is too dearly given to serve the honour of a Rathenow," he said to himself.

Herr Johannes pulled out a parchment, with seals appended, and threw it on to the table: "Read that, and if the security seems enough to thee, write thy conditions underneath, there is room left on purpose."

Baruch leant him against the table, and put his spectacles firmer on his nose.

He read the document very slowly, and when the burgomaster thought he had finished, he began again from the beginning. The air he now assumed seemed pleasant enough, but there was something ugly about his cough.

"I think, your worship—suppose you were to try it—to beg a little longer time from Henning. He will surely grant it—to be sure he will—if *you* ask for it. I have not the money in the house."

"Not even upon that security?"

Baruch kissed the document: "Pure gold, your reverence; more than twenty times the value. Half of Bukow, the whole of Osdorf—God of my fathers! and the freehold in Mere, with the grand and petty judiciary rights, and, what is worth more than all, the word of Herr von Rathenow!

But ready money is very scarce. His gracious Highness demands scot and tax, and takes ready money, all he can."

The burgomaster was about to seize his cloak, but a moment's thought withheld him.

"Most worshipful sir, if the advice of a Jew is worthy the ear of the wise, grant to Baruch that he may say a word."

"Say on."

"This Henning Mollner is rich; he wants not the money; it is only the right to it that he wants secure. Many a man gives his right away, and takes money for it; it depends upon the bargain only. I would undertake to settle with him, and by God, I could do it for a very little. What will you give me if I bring you a paper signed by Mollner's hand, that he has received the money from Herr Johannes, and transfers to him his claims on the senate? And he who has Henning Mollner and his party at his back, he can get more from the proud gentry than forty and seven score of groschens. They must do it—they must."

"Is it thy business to stir up strife? Beware! Treason and rebellion lead to the scaffold."

"To be sure they do—the poor man; yes, and the rich one too, if he stand alone. But when a whole senate rise up against their chosen lord and burgomaster, then they don't call it treason. Your

worship," said the Jew, again approaching nearer, "you have few friends on the Long Bridge, and many enemies; but your right is a strong and spreading tree towards heaven, and the weak would like to take shelter in its shadow; but if your enemies saw away the roots at night, when it is morning the tree falls. Keep fast hold of Henning, and he will keep you——"

"Worm!" cried the burgomaster, with difficulty smothering his indignation.

"The worms have eyes under ground; they see and hear the shovelling of the miner; and many a tower, under which the people laugh, and lay them down to rest in peace, the worm knows well will tumble ere to-morrow. The worms have also their homes under it, and would fain sit there in peace. The Blankenfeldes, and Bergholzes, and Hoppenades, and Garnekofer, are masters just now in the senate; does his worship know of the accusation that they have filed against him this evening in a privy council? The doors were locked, and there was but one single lamp burning; it had the appearance of a vehmgericht, and they were all agreed—all."

Herr Johannes held himself by the arm of his chair, and had it not been strong, it would have broken under his grasp. His face changed alternately from pale to red.

“What accusation do they bring? Before whom do they accuse me?” These words burst from his tightly compressed lips; but he had no sooner uttered them than he felt ashamed that he had betrayed himself so far before a Jew. “I came here for a loan, Joel Baruch; I wish to hear thy conditions. Is the security I offer not enough?”

Baruch smiled, but with all humility, whilst his hand played over the paper: “Would you be safe, if one should offer you the moon for security?—and though it were massive gold, you could not get up to it. What has a Jew to do with farms and villages? Can he be a lord, who is not worthy to be a peasant? What would he do with investitures and rights of dispensing justice? He is but good enough to be sentenced himself. Take it to ritters and princes, noble sir; they might do something with it. To a Jew it is as the moon would be.” And with a perfectly abject air, he handed him back the parchment.

“God and my Saviour forgive me, that I invoke his name under the roof of an unbeliever! My house, my all, my honour, are they not enough for thee?”

“Enough, Herr!—as long as they are yours; but should the senate lay its hand upon them to-morrow, and put seal upon them, and put you in

duration—will the senate return me my forty and seven score groschens ?”

“The senate ! I will——”

“Teach them what is right, Herr ! To be sure, that is what the people hope. But how ? With his Highness the Kurprince ? Suppose he came in with man and horse, and seized and shook the towns with his strong hand, and took the rule from them, and scattered the powerful, and made those who are masters into servants, and took their feudal rights away, will the mighty Kurprince pay the wretched Jew the money he lent upon them ?”

“The Kurprince ! What has the Kurprince to do here ?”

“He was in the town the day the people stormed the barber’s booth ; he was in the town, and in the booth too ; I saw it all.”

“In the town !” cried Herr Johannes—“the Kurprince ! What did *he* want ?”

“Do you think he was here to see the mummers, or did he nod approvingly when he saw his flag hanging beneath the chimney ? Why does he hold his court so long at Spandow, and why do the Princes of Pomerania, and Anhalt, and Mecklenburg, come to him ; and why is his court swarming with ritters, whom he has punished, and whom he beholds unwillingly ? The bells ring wonderfully ! What does

it matter to me? He does not seek the rags which the poor Jew has."

"Johannes Rathenow not security enough for a Jew!" murmured the burgomaster, who had heard but half he said. It was too much in so short a time. He suddenly grasped his coat-pocket, and produced a case, which he laid upon the table: "Look at that!"—and to himself he said, "I knew it—the dream told true."

When Baruch had, with considerable eagerness, opened the leather case, ornamented with gold, his whole countenance became illuminated, and his hand trembled, as he let the golden links and the glittering rubies play through his fingers: "How much does your worship want upon this?"

"Forty-seven score."

"Forty-seven score only? Pure Venetian gold! I would lend a fifteen more upon it."

"Is the pledge enough for you?"

"It is enough. This is yours; the Mark-graf cannot take this."

"Then, the money!"

Baruch went to his cabinet, and unlocked and opened drawers and shut them to again. He counted on his fingers, and calculated in his head. "Had but your worship come a few hours earlier! It is a pity, I cannot get the money together just now."

“You have seven hours.”

“I was forced, as true as God lives, to give Marcus Henoeh all the ready money I had; the Koeln people wanted it in such haste. But patience, worthy sir; to-morrow morning the cock shall not have crowed thrice——”

“Why did the Koeln people want money so suddenly?”

“For their people, whom they are fetching in all haste from the villages; they have got some hundred together already, quartered, they say, in the taverns and barns. They have to get arms for them, too, and they must be paid.”

“For what?”

“Supposing there may be bad work to-morrow; they are to occupy the church towers, lest the burgesses should sound the alarm.”

“Sound the alarm! Why?”

“When they remove the burgomaster, and nail the accusation to his house door.”

“Accusation!”

“But the seven and forty score groschens you shall have, noble sir, as surely as the God of my fathers lives, before the matin bell shall have sounded. There is a writing here of Balzer Boytin’s. The man just now is safe; it is just for seven and forty score. To-morrow, at the matin hour, it falls due; take it, your worship—it is as

good as money from the mint. Balzer wanted to pay it to-day ; he will give you the money to-morrow ; it is as good as coin, your worship ; you will stand in need of money ; it will be a bad day."

It came over Johannes, as if he was in the cell of a magician who was bringing before him all sort of complicated and jumbled appearances ; as if he was no longer himself—no longer the free and powerful Johannes, whose word was better than seal or signature, and before whose face the mighty trembled ; as if he were a prisoner and a slave entangled in a thousand bonds, which he had not seen, but now saw them first, as the conjuror shewed them one by one. He wanted to throw from him the paper that the Jew had given him in the place of money, but he could not ; his hand held it fast, and trembled, and his head pained him as if it were about to burst. His only desire was to get away, and he hurried, for all was going round with him, notwithstanding that the wind and rain were still beating outside, and the snow already ankle-deep.

"You do well to hasten home, for who can tell what may have happened there. There is a talk about accusing you before the Vehmgericht about old Tydecke."

"Tydecke von Achen. What about him ?"

"Died this evening."

“The best friend I had in the senate.”

“Yes, yes, the mischief-makers, whom the senate met on their way home the other day, laid that on your back, too. It is a fine net; how the gentry string all together, and prove it. You will be surprised. Have you put up your chain again? You can give it to Balzer, when he brings you the money.”

Herr Johannes had not put it up. It remained still upon the table; nor did he ask for it. He wrapped himself over ears in his mantle, and disappeared in the snowfall, without uttering a single word.

“A good night for us,” murmured Baruch, after looking a moment after him. He then kicked the snow away from the door, and closed it without noise, pushing to the bolts and bars. A smile was upon his face, widely different to the one it had worn the moment before. He carried himself higher, and held up his head proudly, as he entered the room, and his eye fell upon the place where his guest had just before sat. It was for Baruch now to bear himself just as proudly as the burgomaster had gone sadly and depressed. He pushed the arm-chair, on which the latter had sat, into the corner with his foot, and took hold of the chain, not as before, with the air of one covetous, and longing for the glitter of the gold and jewels, but rather as a corn-dealer, standing beside a

corn-sack would let the grains run through his hands.

“I know what it is worth to him,” said he ; “and yet he parted with it. Yes, yes, and without receipt, too. Have you come to this, Herr Johannes ! Has the pride of your house descended so low as this ! Here, there, almost on his knees—the son of Matheus !—the grandson of Albertus ! God of my fathers ! had but my father lived to see it !—my father, whom Matheus cast into the dungeon for six weeks ! Had but my grandfather, Isack, seen the grandson of Albertus thus ! God of Israel !” and Baruch knelt him down on the planks, and half in prayer, half speaking to himself, he said, “Albert, with his hands reeking with blood, how he bid them tighten the rack for thee, my father’s father ! The other judges cried, ‘It is enough, he cannot endure it !’ But Albertus laughed : ‘Oh, yes, just a little more ; a Jew is tenacious of life.’ Hast thou seen it, spirit of my grandfather Isack, how the grandson of Albertus lay on the rack !—and how thy grandson drew it slowly and tight ! he said, too, ‘Oh ! just a little more !’”

CHAPTER IX.

JOHANNES RATHENOW had never entered his house as he entered it that night, creeping along the rails, and seeking the back entrance, lest any should see him.

“And yet I am in the right,” he said, laying himself on his bed, where no sleep visited him. He had not even put off his clothes. If he closed his eyes for an instant, it was but to start up the more hastily. Dreaming was still worse than waking; and he lay listening to the nattering of the mice, and the cats upon the roofs. Even the music of the storm, whirling the weathercocks about, and slamming the doors to, was dearer to him than the silence which now prevailed. When the clocks struck, he counted the strokes; and if a torch went past, he followed its gleaming along the roofs.

Before the first cock had crowed, he dressed,

and rang his bell, and it was not long before his daughter, Elizabeth, stood at his bedside. The father, who was at other times so joyful when his child stood in his presence, modest and neatly clad, as a maiden should be, to-day noticed nothing of this, nor yet remarked that her face was as beaming with joy as his own was grey with cares and wrinkles. He bade her kneel down, and then addressed her thus :—

“ You have now attained your eighteenth year, my dear child, and are, perhaps, older than your years, as well in growth as in sense and understanding. You are my only child, since it pleased God, who made heaven and earth, in his inscrutable purposes, to take thy brothers. Your father’s hopes, therefore, and your father’s cares, both are centred in you. I would willingly have left you longer, willingly dear Elizabeth, to your childish pleasures ; but what would they avail you, should the stroke fall upon your father’s head, and leave you an inexperienced orphan, amongst ruins and ashes, where you expected to find flowers only, and the song of birds. I, too, hear birds singing, but they are not linnets and nightingales, they are crows and ravens, the night-owl and the kite, hovering in the dark clouds over their prey. Yes, my dear child, the storm is in the heavens, and it will burst before it passes over. Our house has en-

dured long, but there are rents in the walls, its basis is in the earth; we are an old tree, but the branches have shot up too high, and more of them are withered than blooming. You know how your great grandfather trod aside from the path. He was a man of noble mind, and goodly gifts, but he exalted himself, and, what is worse, he exalted himself above the right. That is what no one should do; it is for none to stretch out his hand further than is just and right. He died in foreign parts. My father Matheus and I have fought and striven to wash out the unhappy stain. God, what have we spent in the attempt! In vain. All that we have done for the general good has been received otherwise than it was intended, with suspicion that a something lurked in the background. They whispered, 'They are akin to Albertus.' Thus, child, the sin of the father descends upon children's children. There are some who say that my father did wrong in allowing his brother-in-law to die in the new market. He did not do wrong in the sight of God, and for the town, for he had sworn. Perhaps he acted unjustly towards himself; but who can know that?"—he continued, in a half-choked voice, "Many a time, child, when sleep flies my eyes, bad spirits whisper to me, 'It is the moaning and sighing of thy father, Matheus, in the eternal

fire, which drives the sleep from thee !' Who can undo what is done ? It is the Lord's doing, and we are but dust. But it was not of that that I would speak to you. They hate us, because I will not shut my eyes to their doings. I am a stone of contention on which their folly must ever strike ; that stone they would have away. They would ruin me, and drag me down——"

"They will not do it," said the maiden. "Oh, father, dear father, do not give way to anxiety. You do not know——"

"I know all ! But anxiety ; no ! My firmness I will not lose, nor a stout heart against everything which comes in my path. But against that which we cannot see ? As I crossed the place where Wardenberg's house once stood, there came a moaning from the cellars ; the wind spoke with a hundred voices. Our house is coming to an end, as did theirs."

It was far different to this what the girl had expected to hear from him.

"They will accuse thy father—they will slay him."

"Dear father !—oh, Holy Mother of God ! what is it you say ?"

"One star may tell falsely, but when many stars tell, they tell truly. 'As long as the chain remains

in thy house, thy house's right shall stand fast. So spoke the voice to thy ancestress, Fides; and yet the voice spoke falsely."

"But you have got it again."

"I have it no longer," said Herr Johannes. "But enough, my child. Sorry things are taking place. The senate, with one voice, is against me; they who were my friends are so no longer. They roar like a raging sea—they undermine like moles. They will accuse me, set snares for me; they will displace me, and throw me into a dungeon. It is not a long way from thence to the new market. Dear child, what will you do then? I am without a friend."

"But you have *one*!" cried Elizabeth, springing up; and first clasping her hands, and then throwing herself about her father's neck, so that he was astonished, not knowing what it meant. "You have a friend—you have many friends. Henning is in the town; he will be here directly; he was here yesterday. Oh, father, how many friends you have!—the Kurprince, the chancellor—oh that you had been at home when Henning came!—but he could not wait."

"He, too, so hurried!"

"He came from Spandow, from the Mark-graf's court. Oh, father, what he has seen and heard! He has been in one room with the proudest lords

and nobles ; they all spoke to him quite friendly, and the Mark-graf spoke to him and called him his ready Henning."

"That was why the lad stayed away so long?"

"To be sure ; and so anxious we were when the people came back without him. Oh, father, but you will not know him again, he is quite another person ! He can go on relating for hours about the splendour there, the flags and the floor cloths, and how three pages bore the train of the fair princess, and how her ladies brought the cushions for her, and how she sat down, and how the drums and trumpets sounded at dinner time, not as they do here even at our greatest festivals, and how pages carried the dishes, and how they were formed outside like towers, and castles, and trees, most pleasant to behold, and how after dinner the Mark-graf gave what remained amongst the poor and the bystanders, and even threw money out of the windows."

"Then Henning will have got a medal ?" said her father, who had stood up, and it seemed as if he listened with little curiosity to what his daughter said, for he fidgeted about the writing-table, and even looked out of the window.

"To be sure. Do you know already ? But it is not a medal," said Elizabeth, and she felt about her neck ; "it is pure gold ; only see, father !"

"What a fortunate boy he is," said Herr Johannes, almost in the same tone, scarcely looking at the chain, and not noticing how red his daughter had become, for his attention was turned to the window, whence he saw some people in earnest conversation coming towards his house, for the day had broken, though only a dark winter day. "For what did he get that?"

"For——" Elizabeth hesitated. "They said—he said—his highness the Kurprince said—I was to have it."

"The Kurprince sent it for you!"

"No, no, not expressly for me," interrupted Elizabeth, quickly; "his highness does not know me. But he said to Henning, and Henning told me the Kurprince said he should give the chain to her who——"

Herr Johannes might now have well listened with more attention, had not a noise been heard on the stairs, and a knock come to the door. What he had seen in the streets, gave him reason to know what was coming, and his heart beat more quickly.

"It is too bad! That is rather too far! We will not stand it!" such were the expressions to be heard outside the door; and the noise in the street below became so loud that the neighbours

began to throw up their windows, and ask what was the matter.

“The burgomaster must come to our help !” cried a rough voice ; and at the moment some four or five burgesses entered the room. Balzer Boytin the horsedealer was one of them, with Hans Zademack the tailor, and Hans Kleinsmedt, who was a shoemaker. There was also one of the butchers’ guild amongst them, and one of the bakers’ holding in his hand a roll with a seal appended to it, all of them looking wild and much irritated.

“We will not suffer it !” cried the butcher.

“What is it, good masters ?” asked Herr Johannes, coming forward.

They all answered at once, but at last Hans Zademack took the word.

“The pretension of the senate ; it’s too bad ! Such a thing was never heard of !—to shut the gates upon us—us, who are burghers ! Is that what the gates are for ? To shut them, and let fall the portcullis for the suburb people, who are our enemies, and whom we reckon nought of, against us who live inside them and built them ! The town belongs to us, and the walls and the gates, that we may go out and come in whenever we like.”

“It may be that you have forfeited your right by some misdoing,” answered the burgomaster.

“Is that, which is our right, misdoing?” continued Hans Zademack, pointing to the paper. We of the four guilds, as there is no help for us in the town, have put down our complaints against the senate, which is no senate, but acts against the ordinances of the towns, and the laws of God, and creates disorder, when it should further order! Therefore, because no one stands by us, of those who should stand by us within the walls, the guilds wanted to send out, and they chose four of us as their delegates to seek help outside the walls, to go, as our fathers did before us, to the Markgraf, who is not only over the towns, but over the whole land, and who looks to the rights of all. And as we were about to set out early, and good Balzer here was going to give us escort to Spandow, where his gracious highness holds his court, they hindered us from passing the gates.”

“They won’t let us pass the gates,” cried the others; “they shewed us their axes, and laughed, and made fun of us.”

“Who?”

“The senate’s people!” cried Zademack. “They have posted their servants and serfs at the doors with clubs and halberds; bullies, loose fellows,

Vandals, villanous faces ! Is that right ? Was that ever heard of amongst good burgesses ?”

“ Death and destruction !” cried the butcher, “ if you let that pass you are no burgomaster ! If we submit to it, we are no longer burghers !”

“ Let the alarm bell be sounded, and they will see what will happen.”

Herr Johannes bid them hand him his mantle, and he put on his bonnet. He had listened till now with astonishment. “ I am burgomaster still !” said he.

“ Let them know it, your worship ; it is high time. They insinuate that you have served the greatest part of your time.”

“ As long as I am so, I will speak a word with them.”

“ And we will shout after you, and make their ears tingle !” said the butcher.

“ The bells will sound it out the best,” cried Hans Kleinsmedt. “ It will be on their heads, sack and rack.”

Balzer made a sign to him in vain, to keep from saying too much. The burgomaster had heard the last words, and he paused.

“ You are in the right, and their use of power is without precedent ; but the senate is the senate, and it is there only that it can be rectified. To

the Mark-graf you would go ; you have the right to do so. Let me see your writing."

Hans Kleinsmedt withdrew his hand with a smile, and they all smiled ; but the horse-dealer, who stood behind the burgomaster, laughed out.

" With permission," said Hans Zademack, " Herr Mathis Blankenfelde sent us word yesternight, that we had nothing to do with your reverence, and that we were not to shew you our writing, as we valued the favour of the senate. Besides, you would perhaps tear it," he added, in a low tone.

" Mathis Blankenfelde !" cried Herr Johannes ; " he sent that message to you !"

" And a good deal more, your worship," said Balzer Boytin, stepping forward ; " which is not fit for us to repeat to you, because we consider you the person in authority. We care nothing about what the council says against you, as long as it is not our council, but its own. No ; Herr Johannes Rathenow," he continued, " it shall no longer be put up with, and if it comes to the worst, let it fall heaviest on him who refuses to put his shoulder to the wheel. To you, the burgomaster, we look for what is right and customary, and to open the gates for us, for the burgesses intend to lay their petition to-day before the Mark-graf. He will give ear to us though all others are deaf."

Herr Johannes must have been deaf too, if he had been insensible to the increasing noise from without. Just then, too, arose the sound of mourning and lamentation from the domestics of his house, and old aunt Gertrude burst into the room, wringing her hands: "Did I not foretel it, Herr Johannes?—it is coming, it is on its road! The senate are holding their session; they are bidding you resign! The crier is crying it at every corner; you are ensnared, Johannes! Oh, holy Virgin, I said it would be so!"

"To the Long Bridge!" cried Herr Johannes, and he pulled the great bell, which was a signal to summon all his household. "On with your better clothes—take swords and halberds—let the staff of office go first. I am burgomaster still, and I will speak a word with them."

"Your worship," whispered Balzer Boytin to him, "with your permission I have a little private matter with you first. I have brought the money with me; it is the time that it was promised."

"On the Long Bridge," answered the burgomaster, pointing, "it shall be done openly—in the sight of all men!"

And now that he trod outside the door, every one drew off their bonnets to him, waving their handkerchiefs,—and shouting, one this thing, another that; for the report soon got wind that he

was going to the senate to speak a word with the proud gentry. The neighbours nodded to him from the windows, whilst the inmates rushed from every house to give him a regular escort. Mistress Elizabeth, who had been in sad anxiety, might now well regain her cheerfulness; but she was still more cheerful when she recognised Henning amongst the crowd. He was mounted, and wore a scarlet coat, slashed with silk; in his cap, too, he wore a feather. It was the wing of the bird of prey, but it had been to the goldsmith's, and was now dressed and nicely set. He looked like a very Ritter. To be sure he had money enough to make such an appearance, but still the people looked surprised, and whispered to one another about him. Herr Johannes could not see him, for he was behind, and the crowd, which was already great, became greater and greater.

Their way lay along the Milldam-street, a narrow thoroughfare. Here, however, they were stopped, for just at that moment the town-crier came up, and read the senate's accusation of the burgomaster. The man was accompanied by one or two of the councillors, whose duty it was to take it to the house, and summon him before the senate. They nodded their heads at the different points, and gave explanations how and why it was so. It was enough to shake the courage of a good many; and

many who were more friendly to the burgomaster than to the senate, shook their heads, and said it was worse than they had had any idea of.

The first point, namely, was, “That whereas, he the burgomaster had not only superciliously refused a petition which the honourable guild of merchant-tailors had handed him to lay before the senate; and, on receiving it, had not laid it, as it was his duty to have done, before the senate; but had torn the same, in the open market, into small pieces, to the endangering of the senate, and to the dishonour of the honourable guild, and all other honourable guilds and corporations.

“Whereas, also, it having been declared and testified to by many honourable witnesses, that Koepkin Zarnekow, the town’s greatest enemy, had been in the town, the executive had been in fault in not being cognisant of the same, and causing him to be arrested; so that Zarnekow, to the peril of the town, had ridden out again, with other of his companions, and escaped.

“Whereas, also, his gracious Highness the Kurprince, attended by some of his nobles, had been in the town on the same day, as was now beyond doubt, and the burgomaster, whose duty it was to acquaint himself with the coming of honourable guests within the town’s boundaries, had in this case also been wanting, not having sent the grace-

cup to his noble Highness, as was right and proper, such neglect being to the town's irreparable disgrace and injury.

“Whereas, also, on the same day, the gentry of the town having met at a banquet given by Herr Thomas Wyns, he had announced himself as ill, but only because the senate would not justify his rending the paper above named, and giving occasion in that way to riot and evil-speaking; and whereas he had not been ill, but been held back by vexation and pride alone, the same causes having kept him, since that time, away from the senate, to the detriment of the town and the common weal.”

“Whereas, also, certain evil-disposed persons, on the night of the banquet, having been engaged to carry home certain worthy gentlemen, had borne them hither and thither, to the vexation of all, and the damage of many; several having still bad colds, and others being yet confined to the sick-bed, whilst the honourable and worthy Herr Tydecke, of Achen, the ornament of the town, and the true friend of the citizens, had so suffered, that he died yesterday, no steps having been taken to discover who the same were, though everybody knows them and their leader, the same who is now going backward and forward to the house of the burgomaster, not having done so previously; all this giving

great vexation to the quality of the town, who wish it to be inquired into.

“Whereas, also, the senate having duly acquainted the burgomaster that he had no right to negotiate singly with Henning Mollner, in the matter of his claims on the town, it being an ancient dispute between the towns regarding their rights, not to be proceeded in by any single one in either town, not even by the burgomaster; and whereas the burgomaster returned answer, ‘that he minded not the senate;’ and whereas the senate again informed him that he must not pay the seven and forty score of groschens, to which he returned answer ‘that he would pay them;’ the same being threatening, disobedience, and treason.

“Whereas, also, he had interfered with the rights of the senate in the matter of Hans Makeprang, who was robbed outside the gates, it being for the senate alone, in its wisdom, to take such steps as were necessary, and such steps having been taken; the burgomaster, however, having first sent an insolent message to the senate, which it is his duty to preside over, and not command, had then anticipated its decision; talking to the people also against the senate, the reputation of which he ought to protect, and not detract from; having also counselled the people to strike for themselves, and to follow Henning Mollner, giving to him, and

to his own servants also, weapons out of his own armory, such being a provocation to disobedience and self-will, it being a bad example, when they who should be first in good deed and in submission to authority, do themselves what they can against it.

“Also, and lastly, whereas, it must be plainly perceivable, from these and many other things, that it is the intention of the burgomaster to cease to take part with the senate, and to join himself entirely to the common people, as was done in the time of his grandfather Albertus and of Tilly Wardenberg, by which the interests of the town received irreparable injury; it being for this reason alone that he is about to hurry the payment of Henning Mollner, being of intention to pay him contrary to the will of the senate, having also allowed him to enter his house, which before had been forbidden him; meanwhile he and his companions deride the senate in every wine vault and tavern, so that there is libellous and rebellious talk against the senate in every street and corner, to which the burgomaster does not attend, rather encouraging the same. Therefore, it is the duty of the senate, and all honest citizens, to restrain such disorders, and to do all that in them lies to re-establish obedience and good order, by aid of which

the towns have increased, and flourished, and dispensed justice, from olden time to now."

Such was the substance of the accusation; but it was clothed all through with so many words, that not every one could understand it; and the crier did not read it all in the same voice, for at the wink of the senators with him, he went quicker over the parts about the party which the burgomaster was courting from among the people; all about that he read indistinctly. There was one, however, standing at his house door, who understood every word; it was Pawel Strobant, whose house was in the Milldam street. His wound was pretty well healed, though he was still disfigured; handsome, however, he had never been.

It was he who now darted from his house door into the circle, and had the paper out of the crier's hand before the other could look about him.

"What is this rubbish for?" shouted he.

"It is a complaint, Herr Pawel Strobant," cried Herr Marcus Trebuss, the senator, who was standing by; "it is to be affixed to the door of the burgomaster, should he refuse to receive it."

"I know how to do better with it than that," answered Herr Pawel, crushing the paper together

in his hand into the shape of a ball ; all who saw it, started back, and kept silence, some from fear, some from delight.

“ Herr Pawel Strobant, do you know what you are doing ?” cried Herr Trebuss.

“ I am in my senses, good neighbour.”

“ Give back the paper ! God have mercy ! We have no copy. You are touching the senate’s reputation !”

“ What ! does the senate look like that ?” cried Herr Pawel, holding up the crumpled paper as high as he could. “ See here, ye good folks of Berlin, look what the wisdom of Koeln has hatched ! They think of displacing our burgomaster with rubbish like this ! Oh ! oh ! to have one of Koeln manufacture ? Grease your shoes by yourselves ; your oil smells too strong !”

In vain did the diminutive Herr Trebuss stumble about to get hold of the paper again, and in vain he winked to his companions to help him ; Herr Pawel Strobant was a man whom no man liked to come hand to hand with.

“ You are stirring up rebellion, Herr Strobant !”

“ Rebellion ! You are the paragons of rebellion—you of the council.”

“ You are a councillor yourself.”

“Did any one come to me for counsel? Who are your senate? Give honour to Mathis’ set—Blankenfelde’s spittle-lickers—Koeln mushrooms! You to advise for the good of both towns! Behind our backs, in a corner, and in the dark! Into the ditch with your counsels, we are the men to counsel ourselves. There is some one on this side the Spree, too. Back—back! you have made this journey for nothing! Back, or Pawel Strobant will shew you the way. Was there ever such a thing! Take our burgomaster away with rubbish like this! Why don’t you take Saint Mary’s tower, too? Respect and honour for Berlin! See, this is how I respect Koeln.”

And with that he tore the paper into a hundred pieces, and threw them about him.

“Rebellion!—riot!” shouted Herr Trebuss, and those about him. It did a deal of good, his shouting. There were a thousand throats round him to cry, “Riot—rebellion!” but they meant it the other way, and to cry other things injurious to Koeln. The mills on the mill-dam ever make a noise, so that one can scarcely hear oneself speak; they have made it always, and there will be the noise so long as the mills stand there. But to-day they were no more heard than is the purling of the mountain stream, when a storm is raging over-

head, bending and tearing down the trees ; and like that was the storming, shouting, and pushing, on all sides.

“ Make way ! Way for the burgomaster ! ” was the cry, and the living stream poured along towards Saint Peter's. “ Long life to Johannes Rathenow ! ” re-echoed from the very clouds.

“ Put your best legs first, good friends of Koeln,” cried Herr Pawel. “ Honour to whom honour is due. You see your neighbours can't allow it, they are determined to pay you the first visit. Take care of your heels, that we do not tread on them.”

The press was irresistible. The Koeln people were driven before it, and half of Berlin poured down the Milldam, so that the fish-women were pushed over their tubs ; away went the crowd along Broad-street, in scorn of the rich Koeln gentry who lived there, making their way to the Long Bridge.

It may be asked why they did not take the nearer way, through the street which leads to the Oderberg gate, straight towards the senate-house. They had, no doubt, reasons for it.

Herr Johannes, walking in the midst of his people, bore himself right nobly, looking like a burgomaster, and he seemed to know it too, and wish

that the others should see it also. What with the crowd behind him, and the colours, and the weapons which the younger part had caught up, it seemed not like a day of disgrace, but rather of honour, for the old man, who walked a head higher than he usually did, graciously nodding to all who saluted him.

CHAPTER X.

"I am here, ready to render account on every point, and on all your pretty turned sentences! Out with it, good sir, out with it, I say! I am the man to give answer, when questioned plainly." Thus spoke Herr Johannes Rathenow, hammering on the table with his buffed-leather-gloved hand. "You have accused me—were about to condemn and disgrace me. I will give you answer here, as long as it pleases you. This is the fit and proper place. I am ill no longer—I am well, as you shall see full soon."

Just as the trumpet often fires a man, who by nature is not courageous, and inspires him so that he surges with the foremost, and is boldest amongst the boldest, so it was with Herr Johannes Rathenow, who was now quite another man to what he

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Just as the trumpet often fires a man, who by nature is not courageous, and inspires him so that he strikes with the foremost, and is hottest amongst the heated, so it was with Herr Johannes Rathenow, who was now quite another man to what he

had been when descending his own staircase. Angry he then was, but it was a subdued anger; but the noise about him and around him had made him loud; what was simmering before now boiled over. Was it a wonder, when Pawel Strobant had been by him, rushing like a mad ox amongst the people? Pawel Strobant was the only one who, up to then, had been on his side; for how many a one is there, who, seemingly powerful—yes, and just also—is yet compelled to go with his party, or run the risk of losing it? It is a hard game that ambition has to play! How many, who in the opinion of the world would seem as if they could level the ground they tread on, and bid the clock tell its hours according to their will, yet, in reality, are the last to be really free! Still, who can see where it is that the flea pricks them, or the shoe pinches them, and who they are that are pulling at their skirts, guiding them as they will?

But who can blame Herr Johannes, considering all that had happened, and was yet happening, to irritate him. No one burgomaster had the senate ever treated in such a manner. Could he possibly have remained calm, with the people running to him from every corner, shouting to him; and again his opponents being, in consequence, more furious than ever, and doing all they could to cause him annoyance, for his coming had flown through

the town like wildfire. A person, at a corner, had tried to throw water on him, and it wanted but little that the house had been stormed and pulled down. In the senate there had been different opinions. Some, when they heard that the burgomaster was coming with a great crowd, thought that the sitting should be adjourned. But the dyers, and linen-weavers, who all lived in Koeln, held with the Koeln party; they had hopes of becoming a separate guild. The Koeln people favoured them, whilst the Berlin party opposed the grant. These gathered, therefore, round the senate-house, and shouted to their friends above to be of good cheer. And they were not few; most of them, too, had weapons. This encouraged the courageous; and as for the others, how were they to get along the Friar's-street, full of people as it was? The linen-weavers and dyers had so beset the door, that the burgomaster could not have got in but for his friends. But Pawel Strobant made way for him; and when he was at fault, there was Henning. Many a mother's son was well squeezed against the railings, and one prop giving way, a few linen-weavers were pitched into the area. They fell soft, but they had more ridicule to undergo than they liked.

Not only the burgomaster and Pawel Strobant forced their way into the chamber; all who could

get in followed. There was no room outside. The Koeln senators looked most of them pale enough. They who could, got into the corners, and they who were generally the loudest, were now as still as mice.

"Now, good sirs, I am here to speak with you," cried Herr Johannes.

Mathis Blankenfelde at last summoned resolution. He was seated so far away, behind the table, that he was not easily to be got at: "Who are they, Johannes Rathenow, that are with you? Are those your councillors?"

"And who are you?" shouted Herr Pawel. "Who chose you?"

"Order!—silence!" cried the many.

Herr Johannes' gloved hand was still upon the table: "I am here to answer you. But if so be that your tongues cleave to your palates, it is for me to question. Who, then, shut the gates upon our citizens? Who closed the gates without the burgomaster's warrant? Who was it who called armed men into our walls; men having neither citizenship, nor yet being feudaries? Who was it did this, to the vexation of the citizens, and the ignominy of the town?"

Forty or fifty voices roared out, after every question, and the loudest of them was Henning Moller's. Henning had got upon a window ledge, holding himself by a cornice, and was mocking the

Koeln party as industriously as he could. Some say he even made faces at them.

“Come, then, gentlemen, pray proceed; the matter must be explained!” cried the burgomaster. “And what have you against me? I have not yet read your paper.”

“It didn’t get as far as Berlin—the pretty writing!” shouted Pawel. “It was written Koelnish fashion—enough to poison a rat!”

This was too much for some of the Koeln party. “Out of doors a Koeln writing rings like ready money, whilst a Berlin one goes wandering about like a bad shilling, till a Jew takes it,” so they spake one to another, but not loud, yet a spiteful word is sure not to go unheard, nor without echo either.

Konrad Ryke got up and spoke warmly, but the noise prevented a single word he uttered being heard. The crowd were occupied watching Balzer Boytin, who stood counting money out of a bag at the end of the table. Just then, too, the burgomaster called Henning Mollner to him, and all were silent, whilst in a firm voice he spoke as follows:—

“From as much as I heard of the accusation made against me (for the writing I did not see), the patricians forbid me to pay to you, Henning Mollner, forty and seven score groschens, in which

amount you are the town's creditor ; and, in paying it, they also account me guilty of violation of right, and of treason. The debt, as allowed by learned men, both of old and of the present time, is a just debt, and is due from both towns, inasmuch as your father was taken when fighting for the welfare of both, and had, therefore, to be ransomed ; forasmuch, therefore, as the debt is a just debt, I now pay it to you, Henning Mollner. Take, then, the money, and give an acquittal to the towns ; it is your just right."

A murmur ran through the chamber, a shout of approbation was raised by the spectators ; and as the news ran like wildfire down the stairs, and along the crowd to its furthest extremities, there rose a cry of " Long life to the burgomaster !" and " Long life to Henning Mollner !" loud enough to unsettle the resolution of the men of Koeln. Herr Johannes next turned him to the senators, and his eye glared upon them as he spoke.

" I have done it, sirs ! a hundred witnesses, and more, stand here to testify that I have done it ! You have now reason for your accusation, and, moreover, you have proof. I have done it—with your permission, or without your permission. I have done it, not for the sake of the senate, but for the sake of the right ! Whether or not the senate will endure in its injustice, the God who is

above us can only tell ; but this know I, that ‘ the right ’ will stand fast and endure so long as the world endureth ! ”

The very walls shook with applause, but Herr Johannes continued—

“ Do ye know why I have done it ? Ye cry, for the sake of a party that I hope to gain. Yes, ye are right, I do wish to gain a party, but that party is of my own just deeds, to be my adornment in the face of men, and my companion to the presence of God. A far better one than a party in a senate which counsels one thing to-day and another to-morrow. And again, why have I done it ? Not for my sake only, but for your own ; that the people may no longer say that the senate of the towns of Berlin and Koeln having put off its just debt for thirty years, is in the one and thirtieth guilty of an equal injustice. For your sakes, ye of Koeln, lest ye incur punishment for breach of alliance, seeing that ye would divide with us our gains, yet bear nothing of our losses—seeing that ye, bending under your riches, yet refuse to put your hand into the bag, be it for but a poor score of groschens. For your sakes, then, and for the united towns’ sake, have I done it ; for the honour of our ancient alliance, that which our fathers founded. I praise myself, therefore, and throw back your accusation upon yourselves—upon ye,

senators of Koeln, ye who for thirty years have gainsaid that which is just; and for the sake of forty and seven score groschens have made a crack in our walls, which a hundred score—nay, not a thousand score, will ever repair!”

The senators of Berlin nodded assent to this, even they who were not on the burgomaster's side. Some of them, too, who had been his friends before, joined him now again. A man, anxious to have a party, must not sit him down a whole week behind his stove, and cry “mew” as Johannes had done, but be up and ready to speak a powerful word, else the justest cause will prosper badly in his hands. It was but owing to this that the Blankenfeldes and Bergholzes had got the upper hand, for at other times they were by no means popular. But, all ye saints! how Johannes' words took effect upon the Koeln party, for they had not been handled in that manner till now—to stand themselves as culprits before the accused!

Herr Mathis Blankenfelde stood up to speak, but his words were like those of an attorney before a judge—it was special pleading; the ear was confused by the many words, but the heart remained untouched. He spoke pathetically about the good agreement so necessary to the common weal, and how that he who would govern must, above all things, learn first to obey, just as he who would

win must go first and lose in order to win afterwards, and every sentence ending with delicate insinuations against the burgomaster. Then again he spoke in a deploring tone, as if half-choked by his feelings, about the necessities of the people, and how one would do better to inform oneself of their wants in the workshop, and otherwise in quiet, than in going through the streets with tumult and shouting, drawing a rabble after him. Then he spoke of the utility and good conduct of the tradespeople, in such a way that a stranger hearing him would have thought him really a burgher's friend ; especially he praised the linen-weavers and the honest dyers, such constant allies they were of the senate and lovers of decorum, so orderly and well-conducted, paying their taxes, and proffering their services, as beseemed good citizens to do, and yet refused by some, whom he would not name in the matter, letters of privilege which other guilds, he would not say undeservedly, possessed ; though it was little to the furtherance of the general good to favour one trade more than another, or to feed one with the substance and another only with hopes.

The mere prudence of a speech, such as his, may at best be thought doubtful, for who, at a time when a house is on fire, will take notice of how correctly it was built, though it be ever so clearly

pointed out to him? How can a man, who is fighting, listen at the same time to a sermon about concord? But still how could one know where this address was leading to, for Blankenfelde was an artful man; it was not, however, allowed to be brought to an end, for Hans Zademack the tailor broke into the middle of it, turning himself directly towards the dyers and linen weavers:—

“Believe the fox if you will, when he talks to you of truth and good faith; we know better. Good neighbours, dyers and weavers, hang not yourselves to his tail, he will let you go when you most want him to pull you on. Who was it who closed the gates on us, lest we should bear our message to his gracious highness the Mark-graf?”

“Who shut the gates?” roared the mob. This time, however, we must do the Koeln party the justice to say that they were not frightened. It might be, that just as Johannes had got warm, they had got warm too. A lump of ice thrown into a boiling cauldron will not remain ice; it begins to boil with the rest. So they all cried out with one voice—“It was we who shut the gates!”

Who could now remain sitting? Up they all sprang on the tables and benches, each one striving to raise himself a head higher than his neighbour.

“And I accuse you, therefore, of arbitrariness and of treason!” shouted Herr Johannes above the noise.

“It is he that is the accused!” answered the Koeln party.

“He is no longer burgomaster!”

“He will be your master yet!” bawled Pawel Strobant.

“Of that I accuse you!” repeated Herr Johannes.

“Before whom? The court is here!”

“Before God and yourselves; before the actual senate and the sixteen of both towns!”

“We are they!”

Loud as the shout arose from their side, there were but few who shouted with them.

“Ye!” cried Pawel Strobant, and his single voice sounded clearer than theirs of Koeln altogether — “ye would be the senate! a herd of swine more likely than a senate!”

“Therefore, I accuse ye!” cried the voice of Johannes, heard above all; “and for that into these towns into which no one bearing arms may enter, not even the Mark-graf himself, ye have privately introduced people, your servants truly, but not subject to the senate! Ye have brought them in under cover of the night and the mist, with sword and weapon, and have hidden them in the town,

and placed them in the steeples, not for the towns' profit, but your own ; for this, then, do I accuse you of treason to the towns. The common interest you have perverted into yours, and your deed is a transgression and an offence."

"Johannes is right !" said Konrad Ryke, who, till now, had remained silent. Many others of the Berlin party who had been undecided, now came to the burgomaster's side. It is a pity that they were so few, else there might have been something carried through in proper form and order ; but as it was, it was like a Polish diet : it seemed as if each was about to eat up the other ; they shouted in one another's faces, and shook their fists at one another, not a word of either party's being intelligible.

But before the scene closed, Herr Mathis Blankenfelde got another partial hearing : "You are many here, and we are few ; we may give way on these benches, but not in our demands. Choose a senate for yourselves from among tinkers and bastards ; the dough is obedient when the stamp is coarse enough. Make yon weaver's boy your burgomaster, and yon horse-dealer your chancellor ; it touches us not. Break down, too, the Long Bridge—our end will suffice for us ; we rid us of your beggary."

"Foul-mouthed slanderer !" cried many a voice ;

and Pawel Strobant, springing on the table, shouted—"A saw here! let us divide the table and load their backs with their half of it!"

"Get you gone a dancing again to Albertus' fiddle," shouted Herr Bergholz.

"Sew up his slanderous mouth!" cried many of the Berlin party.

"Yours will be wry enough soon," shouted Hoppenrade; "but when we find it out we will have no vagrants; our beadle carries a heavy staff."

"Come to you!" answered the others; "it will be when our overseers have got not a single mouldy crust."

"Let us go," began Herr Bergholz.

"Away with ye!" shouted Pawel Strobant; "it stinks of fish so; the air will be pure now."

"Till you have rain and thunder."

"From Koeln side! Oh, heavens! Creep under your wives' petticoats, stick your heads under your bed clothes, lest ye hear the alarm bells from Saint Mary's and Saint Nicholas'."

"They will sound from another quarter," said Hoppenrade.

"And," added Blankenfelde, "loud enough to shake the cotton wool out of your ears. Make the best of your time whilst the table is your own, it will not be for long; just as it was in the time of

our forefathers. We shall send for one, and one that is not far off either, who will restore order. That one is at Spandow ; he shall judge betwixt us."

And away went the Koeln party with threatening gestures—not, however, without having a good word or two from the Berliners : " You will have to dance when you want to fiddle," and many such like. But not a word could be understood as long as one single man of the Koeln people remained within hearing.

Herr Johannes threw himself back on the arm-chair provided for the burgomaster. He was dreadfully tired. He sat him down like a conqueror, the enemy having left him the battle-field ; but yet many a conqueror remaining on the ground after a hard contest, has felt himself also conquered. Whom had he with him ? A few Berlin senators ; and though there were good people amongst them, yet where was the one who was fit to stand by him ? There were the two Wyns, and Otto Buch and others, but how could he determine on anything with such as those ? Pawel Strobant was a man never wanting when there was any hand-to-throat work ; but what was he worth when there was any moral difficulty ? He was busy with the retreating party, cursing and shouting after them. Blankenfelde and he had never been the best

friends, but the damage which Pawel had received at the barber's booth, was what the stalwart senator could never forgive.

A real matter of surprise it was to those who were aware of the irritation between the two parties that the affair had gone off so quietly. Some said it was because Henning Mollner had held back, and many reasons for his doing so presented themselves; some said he wanted to play the gentle, and be hand in-hand with the burgomaster; others, that since he had got the money he was altogether another person; not that he was by any means pleased and satisfied; on the contrary, just what he most wanted he appeared now first at a loss for; for to be sure he had now no longer any ground for complaint, the thirty years' plague and torment was now at an end.

Still, whatever influence Henning might have had with the populace of Berlin, he could have had none with the Koeln people. The dyers and he had had many a quarrel, particularly since he and his fellows had rolled up their senior in a piece of cloth, as if he had been a child in long clothes. The man had been well nigh strangled, for the mischievous boys had rolled him up and down the field till he was black and blue, and the cloth torn to pieces. It was such a regular

cause of quarrel, that the people began to say that the weavers and dyers were playing into each other's hands.

Whatever one or the other might say, it was clear that the two parties could not have separated so quietly, had it not been that both had their separate thoughts and intentions. Another thing was, that they were not exactly in the right place; they were thrown, too, so irregularly together, and were without weapons to bring the matter at once to issue.

The town-clerk, who was staunch, whispered to the burgomaster: "What is to be done now?"

"It must not be thus. By God, it must not be thus!" cried the burgomaster, springing up. "A mediator is indeed wanting, else our alliance is at an end."

"And an influential one," answered Herr von Gröben. Herr von Gröben was a country nobleman, who had but lately bought the freedom of the towns. He was a stately gentleman, and had been only lately elected senator. He had not mixed himself with the parties, being a lover of peace.

"With permission," said Balzer Boytin, "if the gentry in the towns differ amongst themselves, how are the towns to settle their differences? Each

one looks at the matter with prejudiced eyes—a higher power is wanted. That is what the four guilds say.”

“And the Koeln gentry the same,” said another. “From what we have heard, they too purpose to send a message to Spandow.”

“And what that will be,” said Otto Buch, “a blind man may see, and a deaf man hear.”

“Their information should be anticipated.”

Hans Zademack spread out his paper, whilst Balzer Boytin asked—“Will their worshipfuls the burgomaster and the senators listen to the petition of the four corporations, the one we were hindered from despatching this morning to Spandow.”

Hans Zademack commenced, and very well it sounded, though there was nothing new in it, nor more than what the guilds and the lower classes had long demanded of the senate. A clever writer had, however, put it together, for it read so smoothly, and was so well put together, that a senator himself could find nothing to disapprove in it as to style. Again, the distresses of the towns were so graphically depicted, that it was quite touching; and how the differences and the jealousies existing were to be healed? How could it be hoped for, save by the Mark-graf taking pity upon the towns, and sending judges to settle what was

right, and to fix it so for ever? But there was also a good deal in it which would not have met with the burgomaster's approval, but so expressed that it was not altogether so clear when only read over; and Hans Zademack hurried over that part of it, just as the town-crier had hurried over some part of the burgomaster's impeachment; for how could Herr Johannes have given his signature to a paper which traced the root of the evil to the haughtiness of the patricians, and said that there could be no expectation of better things until the tradespeople and commonalty had a right to choose senators out of their own body. That the patricians were the sole cause of the continual strife which was thereby entailed upon the citizens who were not interested in the matter. Whilst the cost was not borne by the parties concerned, but by the public funds. All such as that the burgomaster was not allowed to hear, for Hans Zademack either passed it altogether, or read it unintelligibly; but he read out clearly enough how that in the person of their burgomaster the honour of the town of Berlin had been deeply wounded, and that there could no good be expected until the Koeln people were reduced to their proper level.

The four deputies next came forward to ask permission to betake them to Spandow; and as no one opposed their going, the burgomaster gave

Henning a commission to see them through the gates, and give them escort to beyond the town's boundary.

"Are they properly authorized?" asked Balzer Boytin. "The Prince might ask, 'Who sent you? I see nought here but the seals of the four guilds.' And he might say, 'Is the burgo-master and the senate of Berlin agreed therefore with those of Koeln?'"

"Where are the senators of Berlin?" asked Herr Johannes, and he looked around him with a sorrowful air.

"If they wait," answered the clerk, "till we summon them separately, so as to come to a resolution in form, it would be too late."

"In such cases we know, from precedent," said Balzer Boytin, "that the head must speak for the body, which is fitter than that the body should speak for the head."

"It is not as it should be," said Herr Johannes, who was ill at ease to see, with the exception of the few we named, no one with him, save the people and their speaker. "Did each of us first think what it was his duty to do, and then think also how much exactly he had the power to do, it would be better for the general good."

"You say well," said Herr von Gröben, "and as beseems a Christian ruler. If you think it

good, Herr Johannes, I will ride with the delegates, and speak with his Highness. It will not be without profit to my good town of Berlin, for the Mark-graf is my friend from the times of his father, whom I often counselled to peace; and, besides, many a Ritter is indebted to me for my intercession on his behalf."

"The noble Prince cannot but receive us graciously, if Herr von Gröben puts in a word for us," said Balzer Boytin, and a close observer might well have observed a crafty smile play over his features; "for how can a plain burgess speak as is becoming to a prince? He might refuse us on that account alone. What do our quarrels signify to him?"

Herr Johannes gave his hand to his friend Von Gröben. He was by no means well pleased; but just at the moment there came the noise of trumpets and other music from across the Spree, and news that the Koeln patricians were addressing the common people, drinking with them, and making common cause. That on all sides the separation of the towns was agreeing upon, and that the talk was that the insolence of the Berlin people must by all means be got rid of, and that many of the tradespeople were being induced, by such means, to sign the writing which they were about to send to the Mark-graf.

“It is full time, then,” said Otto Buch, “that we go to him.”

“As far as we are concerned, we will manage to be there before them,” said Hans Zademack.

“Still,” said one, and what he said gained general assent, “the burgomaster’s name must be thrown in our scale, or Koeln will weigh ours down.” Thomas Wyns and his brother did what they could to persuade the burgomaster, and also Herr von Gröben; and at last he did it, but his pen trembled in his hand. It was more in his nature to be the judge than the plaintiff.

“God knows what I have done!” he said half to himself, leaning back, and throwing down his pen.

“You have done what you could not help doing,” said Otto Buch; “a leader must stand by his party. The trades are not everybody in a town; one class must go with another. He who has cast in his lot with the citizens, and taken their freedom, must share their sorrows as well as their joys.”

“Even as Providence wills it!” added Herr von Gröben.

The passage of the delegates along the streets was viewed by the burgesses with much curiosity and interest. No one could tell what would be the result; but the return of the burgomaster to

his house was like a triumphal march—pipers and fiddlers led the way, the flags of the guilds waved before him, and his name was shouted from every window, with huzzaing and waving of handkerchiefs. Heavy of heart as Johannes was, such a demonstration as this could not but relieve him; particularly, too, as his daughter stood at his house-door to receive him, whilst the musicians continued long playing before the house. He had shaken hands with Henning, and bidden him come again in the evening.

CHAPTER XI.

THE following day was as quiet as the previous one had been stormy, and the day following was quieter still. The Germans of former times were wont to take counsel over their cups, but the decision of the evening had to be considered over again in the morning, and so it happened that they generally acted quite otherwise than they had at first decided upon; that which in the evening had looked red, might the next day look black—and so many a one was now ashamed, and many a one repented; for how would it be when the news should reach the other towns?—how much would there not be said to their discredit?—for favourites with the other towns had Berlin and Koeln never been. They had become the richest in the Mark. And this was no recommendation with others who had been so formerly. “What good have we done by

our quarrel?" asked the more prudent. The senate-house on the Long Bridge stood empty, for if the Berlin people went in, the Koelnern went out, and *vice versa*. It was in everybody's mouth, that things could not go on as they were. But how to remedy it—that no one knew.

On the third day, the two towns looked as if they were dead. The bells began to toll the first thing in the morning, and everybody who made his appearance out of doors was dressed in black. Tydecke of Achen was to-day to be carried to the grave of his fathers. Every one seemed to go as in sackcloth and ashes, as it were, to do penance over the dead for the injury done to all and to each. The sky itself wore its darkest grey. No sunbeam broke through the clouds. Not one of the patricians was wanting at the ceremony. Both parties, Berlin and Koeln, walked side by side, their eyes turned to the ground. Provost Steeger, though partially restored, did not officiate. Perhaps, because the weather was too severe for him; or perhaps it was that the tender-hearted gentleman would have been too painfully reminded of the evening which he and the deceased had so lately passed pleasantly together, and of the feast which had proved fatal to the old man, and from the consequences of which he himself had escaped only through the merciful and special interposition of

Saint Nicholas, who had sent Henning Mollner to his relief. Yet there was no lack of song and chaunt. The choristers from all the churches, the brethren from every cloister, and the whole of the priesthood attended, bareheaded, with tapers and incense. The sermon over the dead was preached by a capuchin monk, and so edifying and touching it was as to move the women to tears. The men, too, were touched to the heart, especially when he spoke about the beauty of union, and how the departed had lived his life long in happy agreement with his wedded wife—an example not to the married only, but to the single also, of how one is dependent upon another; then he went on to the union betwixt soul and body, which ceased but with life, and without which life could not exist, and this gave him opportunities of making allusions to the towns, only that unfortunately the hearers were undecided whether he meant Berlin when he talked of the soul, and Koeln when he talked of the body, or the other way.

It gave rise to many disputes, both that day and the next, particularly among the women: the fair sex of either town maintained, namely, that they were the soul, and the other the body. The men had a good many things to be troubled about, and particularly about the protracted absence of their delegates. To be sure, there had much snow fallen,

but a report had spread, somehow or other, that the gates of Spandow had been closed, and no one been allowed to go out to communicate the proceedings of the court.

This, however, could not be true, for the very same evening a messenger came riding from the direction of Spandow, notwithstanding the depth of snow. As soon, however, as he got so near to the Spandow gate, that they must surely have seen him, he struck off to the left into the wood, and took his way towards the Panke, but so in the hollows, that he escaped the observation of the watchman, both on the walls and on the Wedding Tower. After this round-about, he got into the Oderberg road, and made for the Oderberg gate, announcing himself at the gate as from the Uckermark, a messenger to Bartholomew Schumm, from his son, Melchior. Being let in, he did not ride towards Friar's-street, but, after crossing the Long Bridge, he turned down Broad-street, and returned over the Milldam towards Berlin. A crooked way certainly it was, to take to ride through Berlin, and cross the Spree into Koeln, in order to turn back into Berlin by the way of the Milldam, especially for one suffering from both cold and fatigue. As, however, he rode down Stralow-street, the night having already fallen, he altered his direction again, turning to the left, under the old walls, towards

the Mark-graf's house, which, as we have said before, was near the grey friars' cloister. Knocking here for admittance, he announced himself as from Teltow, with important despatches from the governor of Mittenwald. When, however, they opened the doors, and recognised the new comer by the light of the torches, it was with no little surprise, and apologies for their tardiness in opening, that they saw before them a noble of distinction, in the Mark-graf's service, who straightway hastened up stairs, and closeted himself with the governor of the citadel.

On that evening, especially, there were many curious things whispered in secret in many houses, and in the vaults and taverns. We may especially notice Bartz Kuhlemey, who sat in his own house, leaning his head on his hand, whilst opposite to him there stood one, whom Bartz Kuhlemey's wife was evidently not in the habit of seeing there. Now and then she threw meaning glances at him, just as a wife may be supposed to do, who sees some one whom she does not like in her husband's company. Wives in our days may know how to do this more guardedly, but in the fifteenth century they thought less precaution necessary. She was a right good wife, just such a one as was suited to a man like Bartz Kuhlemey; only he was the master, not she. Therefore, at last, as she took such pains to

shew her antipathy to his guest, banging the doors after her when she came in, turning her back to him, and neglecting to fill his drinking-cup, whilst she could hardly move fast enough when her husband's cup was empty, Bartz said, "Woman, take yourself out of the way."

"Why, you haven't done eating yet," she said, for there stood before him an immense piece of ham, a dish of the freshest sausages, and a glorious tureen of millet broth, altogether a grand sight for a hungry man. Bartz Kuhlemey eat heartily at intervals, but only he himself, for the table for his wife and children was covered in the adjoining kitchen. This was only the case at the evening meal, and it served to shew the consequence of the master of the house. At noon, he always sat at the head of a long table, serving the dishes, and speaking the blessing. Still there must have been a reason why his guest did not eat with him. Perhaps he had eaten already. Perhaps Bartz Kuhlemey had not pressed him, as he had not even obliged him to sit down. There was a something of pride and disrespect in the air of the butcher. Even if he *had* invited the man, it had been in such a way that the other preferred to decline. He was, however, forced to drink; for when did a German ever let a man enter his house without giving him to drink?

“Have you not finished?” asked the wife.

“I need no one to look over me,” he answered, with a look which she might well understand.

“Then what is he doing there?” she asked.

“He is there, and there he shall be!” was his answer, with a look at his guest which was not what might be called gracious. “Come, short and sweet, go out with you,” he said, and he knocked his hand on the table.

“No, I shan’t go out!” said the lady, placing her hand resolutely on her hip.

“Woman!” cried Bartz. But instantly moderating his voice—“I have some business with him: leave us in quiet.”

“Are you going to sell horseflesh? I tell you——”

“You shall tell me nothing: you shall be silent.”

“But I tell you, Bartz, such business will do you no good: I say, trade will suffer by such like. What can you have to say to him that your lawful wife may not hear? Is he your good friend?—is he a guild brother? No, he is not; he is a horse-dealer, and you are a butcher.”

“Peace!” cried the husband; and one could see how he restrained himself.

“But I wont hold my peace!” she continued; “I don’t like this sort of thing in the house, Bartz. A man’s house is his own, and his trade is his

bread. But you are after something out of doors. What good will that do to the house? None. If I was not always after the apprentices, the apprentices would be behind in their work."

"I'll be after you just now."

"Do it!—I'll tell you what I think, notwithstanding. Don't you meddle with what is not your business. Let the town take care of itself, and you take care of your own house. The folks will eat meat, whether the gentry or the common people sit in the senate."

"But not when the oxen sit there; no one will eat themselves."

"And they who kill the best meat will get the best custom," continued the good lady; "they who have their heads full of other things, and let the farmers take them in when they buy beasts, will lose their business. Yes, yes, Bartz, I will tell you that, though you do make eyes like an ox at me; yes, and before him, too—yes, before a thousand. No good will ever come of it—nothing but mismanagement and misfortune. Where is there one who once shouted in the market who now sits in silks? The masters will remain the masters; but the beadle has taken many a one and put him outside the door, and now he may look in the heath for his warm stoves and stew-pans; and that's the way it will be with you."

“And that’s the way it will be with you,” answered Bartz Kuhlemey ; and a little scene followed such as was probably not very rare in those days, and may happen now and then in ours. The lady of the house was a stout woman, but the master was the stouter. To be sure, she didn’t lift her hand, but her tongue went like a bell-clapper : “And keep you to your oxen—what do you know about government ?” To which he replied, “I’ll let you see what I know about government,” the end of the song being, that after a few minutes—for she let him have no easy job, but held on by every cabinet and table—she flew out of the door, and the door was banged to after her. Thick as the door was, and it was of oak, it was not thick enough to prevent him hearing the few little words which she still had breath to shout at him.

A servant-maid was busy within. We need not say that she had been listening, for the quarrel might have been heard to the top story. But she began : “It is not right of our master to trouble himself about things which don’t concern him. Just what the customers say—that the business suffers, and the servants do as they like. Just look how he was cheated at the last market by the fellows from Buchholz.”

The unfortunate maiden had, however, hardly finished her speech, before the heavy hand of her

mistress saluted her on the cheek; and had she not gained the support of the wall, she would certainly have tumbled over.

“What do you mean, you impudent hussy? What my husband pleases to do is right, and don’t let me hear another word out of your impudent mouth, or out you go, out of the door. Do you hear? My master is the master, and what he chooses that he’ll do, and what he does is right. No one else has a word to say in this house.”

After closing the door in the ungentle manner that we have related, Bartz turned him round, and perceiving a quiet smile upon the face of his guest, he asked him angrily, “Have you anything to say about it?”

“Nothing particular, Master Bartz; every one knows where the shoe pinches him.”

The butcher faced his guest, deliberately putting his two thumbs into the folds of his jerkin: “Herr Balzer Boytin, where the shoe may pinch you, I cannot pretend to tell; but I do know when my finger itches, and it is when any one says a word about my wife. She is as good a wife, and as honest and clever a woman as any in the empire; and let any one deny that, or even draw up his lip about it, and I’ll just lay the matter down so straight for him, that every bone in his body shall stand crooked. Do you hear that, Master Balzer Boytin?”

His guest both heard him and understood him, and remained where he was, standing with his hands behind his back. Bartz took his seat again, and after emptying his beer-can at a single draught, he cut a few such ponderous slices from the ham, that one might judge that he was a man quite capable of bringing a woman to a sense of her duty. After working away some five minutes with evident relish, he leant himself back on his chair, loosed a tie or two of his doublet, and passed his hand along his head like a man in quest of ideas.

“Balzer, I don’t much like this matter.”

“Birds don’t fly ready roasted into one’s mouth,” answered Balzer.

The butcher again sat awhile staring into vacancy, and then at a paper which was on the table, on which there were several things written. Bartz Kuhlemey, we must remember, was a man who could read writing, but still not with the greatest ease, and on the paper before him there were calculations in figures.

“Fowl is not flesh,” he said, after a pause.

“A roasted ox is, to be sure, somewhat different. I tell you, when the Emperor Frederick was crowned, they roasted a whole ox on the spit—enough to make a man’s mouth water; the butchers from round about all said that they had never seen such a thing before, and in the towns we certainly do not.

Patricians take better care than to roast an ox for their burgesses. One must say that princes are more liberal in such matters."

Bartz Kuhlemey gave his guest a knowing look : " to exchange our liberties for a roasted ox or two—that would sound very well, wouldn't it ?"

" Who ever said anything of the sort. But the question is, are we to remain beating the wind or are we to eat meat ? The butchers would at any rate decide for the latter.—But we were at the second point."

" It is, then," said the butcher, spelling over the paper—" it is, then, his highness's fixed determination that in future the senate be elected from amongst the trades, as they have been heretofore from amongst the patricians—that they shall be eligible to all offices, such as chamberlain, treasurer, alderman, and burgomaster."

" Does not that sound well ?"

" Ding, dong ! But I want to see it first. It stands so already in the laws which the former princes gave us, with their seals to it ; but how is it in reality ?"

" That is because the trades had their nightcaps on, and let the others do as they liked ; but we are not to be trifled with now, and the friend who will stand by us is near at hand. With his assistance we can manage it, and set everything right, and as we would have it."

“And as *he* would have it, too?” asked Bartz Kuhlemey.

“Yes; tell me why shouldn’t he like it to be so?” answered Balzer Boytin, in a more confidential tone, and bringing a stool towards the table.

“A prince and a burgess!”

“In my opinion, they will go better together than a prince and a nobleman, or a nobleman and a burgess. There is a space betwixt them; they will not be always nudging one another. What does it matter to a prince whether a butcher has ten horses in his stable or not, and whether he rides a wooing like a nobleman? That we vex the nobility, would just suit the prince. The richer the citizen, the better for him; and why should a prince care whether a shoemaker or a patrician be burgomaster? He does not want to be burgomaster himself, nor that his sons or nephews should be so, nor that his daughter should marry a senator. Princes are like the stars in heaven—they bear no envy to us; they let us alone, to go our own way.”

“Only sometimes there comes hail and snow.”

“Have we any instance, neighbour? Were not the Princes of Anhalt the best citizens’ friends? Did they not endow the towns with rights and privileges, that we might be a thorn in the foot of the

aristocracy? Did the Bavarians, who succeeded them, do otherwise? And then the Lützelbergers, and the Emperor Charles, whom God assoil, what did he not do for the Mark, and the towns? Think a moment, Bartz—you can think, if you like—what good would it have done the Nürnbergers to have acted otherwise? Who were their good friends, when they came into the country, and had all the nobles against them, like so many hedgehogs? We lowered our drawbridges, we opened them our gates, we fed them and nourished them, we went with them, and dragged their field-pieces through our sands, to the wasps' nests; we stormed the breaches, and made the way plain for them. We are their natural allies, and they ours—let us not forget that.”

“That was in old times.”

“Just so, neighbour; the aristocracy are now against us—I do not mean the pack who lay wait on our highways—but the whole band of them, who look awry at our towns, from sheer hatred of us. They get hold of us wherever they can. We want support—is it to be expected from the towns? Pooh!—the league is on parchment, nowhere else. It is like a wind in the open country, blows where there is no resistance. We want good, powerful friends; we have them in the Mark-graf.”

Bartz Kuhlemey tapped on the table with his

empty can, and his wife hastening in, instantly filled it.

"I am not satisfied about the thing," he said, after a hearty pull.

"As you will ; no one has a right to force a free citizen. Fare you well, then, neighbour."

"Where are you going to ?"

"To the shoemakers, at the tavern."

"Stay here ; a butcher can do as much as a cobbler, any day."

"Well, there are some people amongst them, and the cobblers particularly. A regular itching they have to shoe the gentry after their fashion."

"Another thing, Balzer. It may well be the same thing to the Mark-graf whether you, or I, or Zademack, sit in the senate, or whether the patriicians remain in it ; but why does he want to interfere with it ?"

"You are a sensible man, Bartz. Every one likes himself best. How can I pretend to say what the Mark-graf would do, suppose there were only us two ? I mean we, the burgesses, on the one side, and he on the other. But he, too, is a sensible man ; he knows you, and he knows me, both of us, one as much as the other ; he knows us all, just as the sun shines upon us all, and sees us all, owing to its height, though we might think it has no eyes but for the roofs and chimneys. Now, tell me who

are these rulers of ours? What are they smelted out of? What stone are they hewn from? Are they trees, or are they mushrooms? It is hard work to cut down a tree—one has to cut away the roots; a push of the foot is enough for the mushroom. But how would it be, if the Mark-graf began to fear that the mushrooms were growing into trees? Saddle your horse, and ride out early; go east, or go west, and all the way, till you come to your inn at night, you will find villages, farms, country-houses, all paying scot to the patricians of Berlin. On the Spree, too, and the Havel, on the Oder and the Elbe, their boats pass loaded. The Schumms, the Rykes, the Brakows, the Wyns, and a score more, are they not rich enough each to put a dozen noblemen in their pockets? They have feudal rights like a baron, take both tax and rent; many an one of them could buy a town, and be like a prince over it. These are the sort that the Mark-graf does not want to have rule; such as these, who rival him in pride and power, and think themselves richer than he, their master, is; now he is not rich, that we all know, and he has had experience of this sort of gentry in Nürnberg. Such as they have struck deep root in the empire, sit upon their gold sacks, have connexions with lords and princes, have their coats of arms, and servants in coloured liveries, and marry their lady-daughters

with nobles and princes. Many an one of them, sprung from a pedler, could buy a principality: such as these are what he fears."

As Bartz Kuhlemey remained silent, he continued—"We are not as far as that, but we might get to be. Is there not many a great one among them already, though the flour is yet upon his coat, and the yard-stick pokes out of his pocket? But we would do the same if we could, and so what have we to say against it? The Emperor Frederick is no Emperor Wenceslas; but gold will find its way everywhere. Who can tell, if the Bavarian line had gone on, whether the patricians of Berlin and Koeln would not have declared their independence? We commoners might have had to kiss the skirts of their garments, and thank the patricians for governing us; only, just then, came in the Mark-graf's father, and looked at the matter differently. The nobility wanted to be independent too; but as it was, nothing came of it; and under the present one there will nothing come of it either."

Bartz clucked his tongue against the roof of his mouth, and busied himself cutting the table with his knife.

"You know I am right. There will nothing come of it; only the question is, who is to have the credit and the advantage? We, and the Mark-

graf, or the Mark-graf alone? That is the whole matter. But I see you are sleepy—Good bye, again.”

“No, no; stay!”

“He has finished off with the nobility; I mean, his father did. But now the nobles, having castles no longer, are beginning to creep into the towns, where it is more snug for them. There are a tolerably good many of them here already—the Buchs, Ruthnicks, Gröbens, Blankenfeldes. They are quite willing, too, to lend a hand to our patri-cians, of course, that we may be better governed. We have no objection, have we? But not so the Mark-graf. Why should he prefer these wasps’-nests and mouse-holes to those that have been pulled down? Will it raise the price of beef, neighbour?”

“Well, well! But it is the way of doing it I don’t like; it is so like——”

“Treason against the senate?” interrupted Bal-zer, in a calm voice. “Yet some way or other it must be done. Could you send another petition to the senate?—beg them to turn the matter over, become reasonable, give us back freely what they so freely took from us? Who knows?—Everything is possible.”

“The plague on them! I would set to, and——”

A hoarse and sinister laugh broke from the

guest: "You set to! When, then? When the last trumpet sounds? Markish blood, and set to before a master bids you! Tell me that the Spree will run up to Kopnick, and I may believe it; but not that the trades will carry anything through. You are not Italians. It came to nothing in Wardenberg's time—why should it not to-day? Three times have they been at it since the Purification; blood was shed before Hans Ferbitz's booth; the day before yesterday the whole town was in motion, the senate-house shaking, the bells ringing—all nothing. Do your best, it will not be done."

"I say, it will," said Bartz, beating the table with his fist.

"Many a one has said that, who, when the time came, looked out for himself."

"To-morrow morning, at ten o'clock"—Bartz again reclined his head on his hand.

"Ten precisely, at the gate. The Mark-graf will be punctual."

"They will make faces!"

"So I say, too; but there will be more merry ones than sad ones."

"But why should it be done here? Why does he not send for them to Spandow?"

"He chooses it so. The shoemakers in Old and New Brandenburg will not be pleased at it; the guild here is to have all the court work."

“Just repeat again plainly. The live beasts from Mecklenburg——”

“Shall be admitted free of customs, from the border into your boundaries, as it stands written.”

“The Holstein, also?”

“Well, if the butchers open him the gate, he may let the Holstein go free too. Punctually at ten o'clock, the horns will blow and the harnesses rattle. The senate will have pale faces. What will you wager, that their pride will not all ooze out, and that the senators of Berlin and Koeln do not run a race, who shall be first with the keys?”

“They shall not be,” said the master; and he gave his hand upon it to the horse-dealer. He certainly did it unwillingly, but he gave it him like a man. “The butchers will be the first, I give you my word for it.”

Bartz had now arisen, and approached the stove. They had a good many things to whisper, as men have who understand one another.

“So, you reckoned upon Henning, master?” said Balzer. “Who was there that did not reckon upon him? But that is just how people are. Put faith in man! As long as the forty-seven score of groschens were unpaid, what a terrible thing it was! Now that they are paid, it is a trifle. What better is he for them?”

"I have been very fond of the lad, and I like him still—my sister's child!"

"Nothing is so contagious as pride. I tell you, master, if the senate knew what it was about, there would be a good many Hennings. A little flattery, a little stroking down, and a man will give his right away for a painted doll. Thanks to our saints, we have more Schumms than Rathenows!"

"Well, well, I have hopes of him yet," said the butcher; "the lad will not turn his back on his blood."

"I have hopes, too," said Balzer, after a moment's consideration. "Would it not have been grand, if Henning had beaten the alarm-drum, and he and his companions burst the door. If it had turned out badly, it would have been only a boyish trick: the guilds need have known nothing about it; he would have had to answer for it, and would have found some way to get out. If the worst came, he would only have had to travel a few years; he could not go wrong, go where he might."

"He is my sister's child, Balzer."

"Herr Johannes Rathenow would not let him take any harm. He is just like one of the family again."

"Donner wetter! do not speak to me of that."

"The people will talk. They say he is there morning and evening, talking away merrily, telling

of his boyish pranks, of his sports, and all about the court of the Mark-graf; plays draughts with Mistress Elizabeth, the old fellow smiling at them. It is very good of the old gentleman,—politic, I should have said. Yes, the Rathenows are politic.”

“ Good heavens ! it will end in nothing.”

“ That is what I say, Master Kuhlemey. A Rathenow and a tradesman’s child ! But he is a clever man—keeps dangling the bacon by a string higher and higher. I am only sorry for poor Henning. High as he may be able to jump, he will not jump high enough to get the bacon.”

“ And I’ll let the lad know it, too.”

“ Not on any account ! Not now. We have to make use of Rathenow to-day, and who knows what good Henning may do us to-morrow ? Let it wait till after, neighbour ; there is time enough. What man in his senses would throw a knife away with which he can eat to-day, though he may foresee that he will not have any need of it to-morrow.” And he continued—“ We have both of us something else to do to-day, and no time to lose.”

Bartz Kuhlemey nodded his head, without speaking. Both took their cloaks, and went down the stairs silently. Their roads led them different ways, but they had another conversation at the corner, where they separated.

CHAPTER XII.

THE streets through which Balzer took his way were dark and narrow ; from but few of the windows of the overhanging houses twinkled a light—a feeble light. A town during the middle ages presented a singular appearance on such a quiet, gloomy evening. The thousand nooks and corners, turrets and arches, lit up by the light shining through the windows, caused an effect curious, but at the same time startling. Pictures like those of the magic lantern played along the opposite walls, and as one light after another went out, the dark shadows came forward more shapelessly. At one place might be heard a hoarse evening canticle ; at another, a prayer with responses ; and again, at another, the snoring of some honest burgess, heard through the pervious wood-work wall. The horn of the watch-

man sounded from the corner, his song rivalling in its discords the caterwauling which had begun upon the roofs. The revellers, who ascended singing and reeling from the vaults, took care to avoid him. To-night there were no revellers in the streets : but Balzer Boytin likewise took care to avoid him. What could an honest man find to do in the streets at ten o'clock at night, when there had been no banquet, unaccompanied, too, by torches ? Balzer had many errands : many a low door had he entered, and come creeping out of again, like a clandestine lover or a thief ; and now he took his way through the narrow passage and corner close to St. Nicholas's, to go to the Oderberg gate, where he lived. Just then, a strong light was thrown on to the square from one of the old houses, and the light made a shadow perceptible moving before it. Balzer sprang at once behind the statue of Roland, to avoid being perceived. It was from the burgomaster's house that the light issued, throwing shadows over the whole place. " He cannot sleep," murmured Balzer ; " and yet he little knows what is coming upon him to-morrow." The shadow in the light was evidently the burgomaster himself, leaning against the window, and gazing out on the Place. Balzer was therefore obliged to remain behind the statue, for the slightest motion would have betrayed him.

The bright light in the chamber came from the supper table, which was still covered, though the meal was finished, and the guests had most of them risen. Two silver candlesticks lighted the table, and spread a marvellously pleasant light over the chamber, and on the dishes, and cups, and vases, which were all left standing in the disorder which a painter loves to portray. Rosy apples and pears in coloured vessels, a pie half eat, on a silver dish, tall goblets, and large-bellied bottles. It was certainly one of those evenings on which a cheerful gleam was allowed to shine through the dull-looking windows.

Only two of the party had remained sitting at the table, drinking their Malvoisie pleasantly, and watching, with gratified looks, the group sitting beside the stove. The two drinkers were the host, Herr Johannes Rathenow, and Herr Thomas Wynn. At the stove, however, sat Henning Mollner and the fair Elizabeth. They were cracking nuts, first one and then the other, and throwing the shells into the fire, laughing and jumping when they burst, and the sparks flew on to the dress of one or the other of them. When the spark could not be found, the one helped the other, and there was much fun, which the old folks sat enjoying. On the other side, sat old aunt Gertrude and another person. He was a

distant connexion, a quiet man, invited when wanted to fill up a corner.

The gentlemen had sat a long time, but the wine had not heated them. They talked of by-gone times, and days of past happiness. Herr Wyns had much to say that was edifying:—That no one should lose confidence—great things came out of little; and often the thing spurned by the foot proved to be a treasure. Herr Johannes might have thought that for one so well off it was easy preaching; but he would not say so, for Herr Wyns had that very morning, after the burial of Herr Tydecke, brought him with his own hand the money that he had refused before, when Johannes had been driven to go to the Jew. How is it that a man does a thing one day of his own will, which the day before he had been begged to do, and had refused? “*Voluntas hominum variabilis*,” says the Latin. Perhaps the Capuchin’s sermon had moved him, perhaps the change of circumstances. The Koeln party had fled before Johannes Rathenow; the accusation was torn, and one heard no more of it.

But Herr Johannes—did he receive the money willingly? No; Thomas Wyns had literally to force it upon him. “*Voluntas hominum variabilis*.” Though he had received it from the Jew and from the horse-dealer, yet it was against his

will to take it, from the honourable and worthy Herr Thomas Wyns, who did not even ask a receipt. He had let it lie untouched in the very place where Herr Wyns had put it down, till the evening; but then he sent his servant Dames into the Jews' quarter with it, and he returned with the chain. Was it the same chain, uninjured? With doubting hands, he took it, and examined it closely, lest the Jew should have filed it or changed the stones. He had done neither, but still it was no longer the same chain. It had been pledged—it had been in the hands of a Jew.

All this, and still more, was confided to Thomas Wyns, over the glass of Malvoisie. He who has few friends, and has an opportunity of easing his mind, may sometimes say more than is altogether worldly-wise. He felt sorrowful and pained, yet cheerful as if he were making his will. He had spoken no severe word that day, nor signed any severe judgment; and Thomas Wyns, though a weak man, was not a bad-hearted one. He listened to it, as it was intended he should, and squeezed the burgomaster's hand, saying—"It was a dream—only a dream, Herr Johannes. It is over and gone. You have got it back, and all is as it was before."

"There will nothing be, as it was before."

"The dream is fulfilled, Johannes. Any further

uncomfortable feelings it would be wrong to give way to."

"But about what is going to happen!"

"And what is going to happen! We have lived, and our children will live, and our children's children, to the last generation; and that is a long way off. I forget how many years the father said it was. However, it was after our time."

"But still, whilst the world is in progress to its end, each thing has its measured season: to the small thing, a short time. Nothing remains as it is, but changes about, as it is with riches. They who are rich become poor, and the poor become rich."

"Yes, certainly; they who have it must keep fast hold of it," said Herr Wyns.

"The right must be kept fast hold of, Herr Thomas; that alone will not perish. Can that blossom and fade, as do the trees and bushes? This was brought vividly before me the other day, as, in riding through a Vandal village, I came upon an old peasant, sitting doggedly in my path. My follower struck him with his whip, to make him get out of the way. The old man grumbled out, that he had as much right to sit in the sun as I had. My servant would have revenged it, but the old man seemed so weak, and his wretched, stony-looking countenance awoke my pity. I said to him, 'Remain in the sun, then, for it shines upon

all alike ; but this land is ours, for the village belongs to the Herr von Biberstein, who is my friend.' The old creature grinned, and said, ' It belonged to my fathers, and not to yours.' And I learnt afterwards, that there were in that village many who traced their lineage back to the owners of the land, its earliest possessors ; and therefore, Herr Thomas, I could not but reflect—' These people, also, had their right, but where is their right now ?' "

" Pooh ! Those were pagans, barbarians, slaves ! But we are Germans and Saxons, who have investitures from the lords of the soil."

" The others had certainly no letters and seals."

" They had nothing, the creatures."

" But how would it be, should again another people come and drive us out, as our fathers did the Vandals, and force us from our possessions and our rights ?"

" The Emperor and the States would be there to prevent that, and that which is written is written ?"

" Could nothing blot out the writing ? That is what I often think about. A fire might destroy archives and records—war might come into the land, and the people forget them. And how many a writing has been recalled ? Suppose the Markgraf himself——"

“Johannes, you are dreaming again. What has the Mark-graf to do with us?”

“To mediate in our dispute. But judges sometimes require such payment as to make the parties regret their quarrel.”

“Pooh! who will pay him—we or the Koeln people? You are out of sorts yet—you look at the dark side. Drink! the Malmsey will clear the maggots from your brain. The Mark-graf, with all his councillors, is just now in a regular pucker how to begin. He is asking the delegates this question, and that question, and every question; he does not want to fall out with either of us. And what good would it do him, if he did?”

“It may be so, and it may be otherwise.” The two had certainly changed characters. Sometimes the timid become for a moment brave, and then they outrun the more firm, who see the danger in the face, and advance but step by step.

“And do you want some news? They tell me that the folks on the other side are beginning to hang their heads; it is not all quite right amongst them. Bartholomew Schumm neither signed their complaint, nor has he attended their meetings; nobody knows why, whether it be caprice, or because he regrets the breach with you. In a word, he grumbles, and keeps aloof. They flood his threshold,

the Bergholzes and Hoppenrades. Mathis himself has been the third time in vain. All his answer is, ‘ They must not bother him ; it is only the old filth stirred up anew.’ Well, is not that good news, Herr Johannes ? What can they do in Koeln without the Schumms ? I will wager they would settle the matter very cheaply just now. But no, no, good sirs—it is too late now.”

“ It is too late now,” said Herr Rathenow, evidently lost in thought, for after saying this he rose up from the table, a thing which no host should do earlier than his guest. But Thomas Wyna took no offence. He could see that the old man was still deranged by his illness, and not in a mood to hear anything cheerful. He, therefore, also rose up to go, for the watchman had just called the tenth hour. In taking leave, he said—“ Go, and seek repose, Herr Johannes. You have got your chain again, and no one will take it from you ; therefore, no bad dreams, man. My little finger tells me that everything will be altered to-morrow, and for the better.”

Herr Wyna now took polite leave of Mistress Elizabeth, saluting her on the forehead ; he then nodded to the old lady, but he lifted his finger at Henning : “ Take care, boy ; you may have had good times of it at Spandow, mixing amongst

princes, and lords, and noble ladies. But mind the proverb—

‘He who of nought save of his trade doth boast,
May be called cobbler, but yet earn the most.’”

And quite at the bottom of the stairs he whispered to Herr Johannes, “What does it mean? The cock cannot fly to the top of St. Nicholas’ tower, but it can crow, and strut round about it.”

The burgomaster nodded his head with an air of confidence: “That I leave to Elizabeth; she is my child; but if he marries a citizen’s daughter, I’ll give him a wedding such as the town shall talk of long. I was his guardian.”

And on again entering the room, he regarded the two with the same complacent air. They were playing together just like children, and Elizabeth made the young man tell over and over again all he had noted of the ladies in Spandow. “I tell you, father, they have bewitched Henning; he has no longer any eyes for a town beauty; he is in love with a noble maiden, only he does not know which; he gets quite red when he names the name of Eva Holzendorf, but as soon as he thinks of Adelheid Pfuel he brightens up, and can scarcely find words to describe her beauty. Henning, beware, lest the maidens in the town hear you!”

Herr Johannes laid his hand on Henning's shoulder : " Girl, girl, what nonsense you talk to the young man. Henning knows what he is about, and gave answers to the Kurprince's questions, such as did himself and us honour ; and he has sense enough not to look beyond his own station. Is it not so, Henning ? Like and like together : he who looks at the stars stumbles and falls ; and you, little slanderer, don't say anything against Henning, who is my good friend again ; he is no fool, nor in love with a lordly lady. What would such a one do in his house ? He needs another sort of person to look to the household and keep things in their places, whilst he is outside, looking after—the affairs of state. The Mark-graf is his friend ; who knows what will not be made of him. We must keep friends with him—do you hear, Elizabeth ? He may be able to say a good word for us, this Henning ! "

This was said ironically, but in such a way that the lad could not be offended, especially when shaking him by the hand, the burgomaster added—" Go along with you now, it is bed time ; I shall have something for you some day soon. I am burgomaster yet ; and if you are still of the same mind—but enough for to-day. Don't be long before you come again ; indeed, come to-morrow ; who knows but——"

“I say again,” said Henning, “there is but one Johannes Rathenow;” and he returned the pressure of his hand, and then that of Elizabeth, with a look so kind and true-hearted, that no one could have helped feeling a liking for him. He then nodded to Aunt Gertrude, and darted down the stairs, not like the youth who had so lately stood in the presence of the Mark-graf, but like the wild Henning whom everybody knew. From the bottom of the stairs he called out—“I shall be here again to-morrow !”

Elizabeth looked for a long time on the floor, and then into the fire; at last she asked—“Father, can the prince make one who is so good, like he is, into a nobleman?”

It was spoken without thinking; but when the two looked at each other, they both were as it were shocked. Elizabeth blushed red all over, or was it the reflection of the fire? But the father was startled at the thought, for it called up others. “Elizabeth!” he said, and then he paused a moment—“every one is what he is born to, not more and not less. The prince is the prince. Could I become a prince!”

“But yet, they say that the Schumms were once brewers.”

“It is not for us to discuss the judgment of our ancestors. The Schumms were received into the

towns as patricians, and chosen into the senate, and patricians they remain. It is not for us to question whether our fathers did right or not, but to take heed that we do right ourselves."

And he led her to the wall, on which the family genealogical tree was hanging. Alas ! how many leaves and branches were spread out over the times gone past ! and now there were but two shields on which there was not a cross, with the obiit, and the day, and the year. And he pointed with pride to the names of the men who were known, in the history of the towns : to that of his father Matheus, who had established the town-league ; to the name of Gerhard, who was burgomaster under Waldemar, when Koeln and Berlin, owing to his good advice and counsel, gave each other the hand, and became as one. Then again to Balthasar, during whose consulate, so say the records, the stone walls of Berlin were built ; again, to the veteran Dietrich, a man of iron, upon whose shoulder Albrecht " the Bear " laid his hand when he was weary after the battle of Niedermetzelen, and said—
" Thou shalt be my prop, and I will be thy shield."
At that time, he sat, scot free, in the town still called Rathenow, until later, under the Ottos, he entered Berlin, and received its freedom. The table went back into the Saxon forests, shewing the Rathenows, previous to their taking their pre-

sent name from the Vandal village, to have ever been free men—lords of the soil, and mighty in the battle ; stanch followers of their princes, but not subject to them.

“ Think on your fathers,” he said, “ and think who you are—a lady as good as any there is in the Mark. Our race may perish, but it will perish in honour !”

“ And do you doubt it, father ?” asked the maiden ; and the lofty look with which she held herself up, meeting his eye firmly and frankly, was enough to drive away at once the clouds which were gathering on his brow.

“ I doubt it not, my child.”

“ I am a Rathenow, and I shall not forget it. But what hopes were those you held out to Henning ?”

“ I will do what I can, and I doubt not of success, to get him the ensigncy ; he merits it.”

He had given her his blessing, and she was gone, when Gertrude stepped before him : “ Johannes, Johannes ! for whom do you labour ?—for whom do you lay up store ? The dead have no need of you ; their honour is in heaven ! When your eyes are closed, your race is extinct, and other races take their root. Wherefore will you entail on your daughter the curse of her fathers ? Set her loose rather ; be a good father, and rejoice

that she is loose ! Bind her rather to the young scion which will shoot up high and bear fruit, not to the old trunk in which already is the worm and decay ! Johannes, Johannes !—list my words ! Thou wilt need the young tree to prop thyself upon, for the reed thou leanest upon at present is of pride and unrighteousness before the Lord !—it will break. Give him not the flag to-morrow when he calls—give him thy child ! Conquer thy pride, Johannes, for the judge is knocking at thy door !”

When Johannes was left alone, he walked to the window, and folding his hands as a pious man does when alone, he reflected long upon the events of his life—on what God had given him and taken from him, and how marvellously all had come to pass. All at once he felt as if a weight was on his breast, huger and greater than the church of Saint Nicholas, which stood before him. The sky seemed to go further and further back, and the church seemed as if growing larger and larger, till his heart almost ceased to beat, and his lungs to breathe ; and he fancied himself praying to God, and the heavenly host, that they would remove his burthen from him. He had never prayed as he prayed then ; and it seemed as if a stream, not of words, but of thoughts, flowed through his veins, and he became well and softened of heart. How

came it so? Not from the Johannes Rathenow, who had stood before the citizens and spoken in the senate, knowing no fear: that man was never soft of heart; it was another than he speaking within him. But as he continued to pray, the figure of Roland seemed also to increase, and grow up into heaven with sword and spear, and formless, stony aspect. Even when small, that face was ugly; but now, immense, it was like a weather-beaten grey heap of stone, with scarcely human features, standing, laughing scornfully, betwixt himself and God and his angels.

“Johannes, what wantest thou with them? I am thy right; I thy saint, to whom thou must pray; the others hear thee not.” But he could not pray to that stony, horrid visage, and he closed his eyes fast. “O God and my Saviour! thou who hast died for our sins, dispel the spirit who stoppeth up my way to the throne of thy father, through the mediation of thy holy apostle Nicholas.” At that the stone figure seemed to shrivel at once together; and as Johannes looked again it was as small as it ever was, and there was a noise and—it darted perceptibly down the dark narrow street. Johannes made the sign of the cross, and drew a deep breath; he had seen it plainly, he could take an oath of the fact, notwithstanding that Roland still stood just as before.

Johannes was a man who feared not to walk in a churchyard at night ; and had a spirit appeared to him, he would but have made the sign of the cross, and looked it in the face. But the like had never happened to him, for spirits choose the weak rather than the strong nerved for their visits. But let any one live, as he did, in a dark corner by Saint Nicholas', in one house, with an old, constantly evil-foretelling prophetess, like old Gertrude ; he himself, too, constantly brooding over his own troubles and the falsehood of mankind—such a one, though the strongest, may become weak, and see spirits. Johannes Rathenow affirmed to his dying day, that he had seen Roland move, and vanish behind the corner of Nagel Street. He never learnt that it was not the statue that he had seen, but Balzer Boytin who had stood there, till actual fear had forced him to take to flight. Balzer told no one ; for why should he own to having played the spy.

Johannes had scarcely laid his head on his pillow, and he hurried to do so, when the house-bell rang violently. He did not rouse himself up, for when evil spirits take once possession of the mind, they do not soon leave it again ; so he, like a sensible man, did well neither to get up nor to listen, but to repeat constantly his Ave Marias till he fell asleep.

CHAPTER XIII.

THIS was the night of the Sunday Reminiscere, and the day following was Monday, the twenty-fourth of February, in the year of our Lord, 1442.

It does not appear that this night was one when the spirits had more than usual power, nor was the ringing of the bell the work of any hobgoblin, nor yet done in mischief. Such a piece of frolic may be indulged in in our days, but the old chronicles have no notice of any such ; indeed, the most of the houses had iron knockers, and not bells ; and, besides, who would have ventured to take such a liberty with the house of the burgomaster.

No—the ring at the bell came from an express messenger. He was from Old Brandenburg, but he had had to cross the Teltow, for he could not get through Spandow, which was the direct way ; he had had to make a great circuit, and his horse had

died under him from fatigue : he had left it lying outside the gate near Saint Gertrude's, and had got into the town no one knows how ; for the Koeln people were not usually so polite as to let a messenger pass by night when his errand was to Berlin. The letter he bore was from Nicholas Pernewitz, and his urgent commands were that the Berlin alderman should receive it on the Sunday. It is an unfortunate thing when a person in authority is afraid of spirits. Much, perhaps, would have happened differently, had Herr Johannes sprang up and broken the seal, instead of hiding his head under the bedclothes ; but in the morning it was too late—matters had gone too far.

Aunt Gertrude, who turned night into day, and who ever wandered up and down with her keys and her missal, long after every one else was asleep, opened the door, and took the letter from the messenger. The man delivered his message from Herr Pernewitz, and craved leave to deliver the letter with his own hand, but he had come upon a person who always did as she pleased, and obeyed the promptings of the spirit within. She promised to deliver the letter at once, but she would not admit the messenger across the threshold. She shut the door in his face, and bid him come in the morning to receive his fee. To his shouting and cursing outside, she was perfectly in-

different ; and to his appeal, that a messenger was always welcomed to a meal in a respectable house, and not left to sleep in the street after a forty-mile ride, all that she answered was, that night was not the time to knock at a respectable house, and the messenger who wanted admittance should come in the daytime. The man was at last obliged to seek an inn, and whilst he was doing so, the old lady was also grumbling, turning the letter over and over, and looking at it on every side.

“What can it be?” said she to herself. “Food for earthly pride and haughtiness! Johannes is asleep, and therefore God is with him. It will be time enough for him to read it when he awakes.”

This was what the spirit within her said. If Herr Johannes had been awake when she noiselessly opened his door, she would have given it to him, but, as he was asleep, she laid the letter on his table. If she had only known how he, strong man as he was, would tremble, when on getting up he found the letter and read it, and how his veins would distend with displeasure—how he would ring his bell, as if it were an alarm of fire, and dress him in all haste, and send messengers here, and messengers there ;—had she known this, she would probably not have listened to the promptings of the spirit, but have done as she had promised the messenger.

It happened too, unluckily, that Herr Johannes got up on that morning later than he usually did. There was, therefore, no time for anything—not even to find fault about the non-delivery of the letter. Without breakfast, without taking leave of his daughter, out he ran—far differently to the usual custom of a burgomaster. First, to Konrad Ryke, who lived near, though he had not entered his house for twenty years or more ; to-day he entered it without waiting to be announced. Then to the Wyns, and the Heideckes, and to how many others—who can name them all ?—ringing at their doors, and entering, and leaving them hastily, spreading astonishment wherever he went. Next he hurried to the Long Bridge, but now no longer alone. A train of senators followed him. He had also sent to Koeln, even to those who were his enemies. By the time he got to the senate-house it was almost full ; and the streets and the bridge were so crowded, that it was with difficulty he could get through. But it was far otherwise now to what it had been on the former occasion. A low murmur passed along the crowd, and every face wore the same expression of anxiety. “ Good people, the will of God be done,” he said to them ; “ but let the senators pass. Without good counsel we are all lost.”

“ What is it ? What is the matter ? ” asked

Elizabeth, springing down the stairs after her father, who was however already gone.

“I know not, child. It is something out of doors.”

“He did not even stay to bid me good morning.”

“Is it the father’s place to be before the child? Well, well, it cannot be so bad. See, Henning is coming up stairs, and singing.”

And it was so, indeed, for the youth came up stairs, singing as merrily as if the bird that invokes the morning was sitting upon his lips. His face was a satire upon the dull, dark day, and the deep February mist. His eyes glistened like the May dew, when the sun shines on it; and his gait and bearing were as if he had wings, and disdained to walk.

Not a word did he hear of all that Elizabeth hurriedly said to him about the sudden departure of her father, nor any of her questions as to what was the matter in the town. He, who was ever the first when there was anything on foot, to-day was not even aware of the general excitement; he had seen none of the people who had met him with hasty questions. Elizabeth had to draw him by the hand to the window, and to point out to him the people crowding about, running to and fro, whilst others were shutting their shutters, as

was customary when any disturbance was anticipated.

“What is it all to me?” said he, with a laugh, and he gazed into her large blue eyes, till she was compelled to drop them. “I did not come here about that.”

“What was it, then, you came for?” she asked, scarcely daring to raise her eyes.

“I come because your father told me to come;” and he laughed again so heartily that the girl was half frightened. “He has something good to tell me, your father has.”

Meanwhile the noise outside was increasing. Crowds were hurrying to the Long Bridge, others in other directions, pushing and crowding. People were shouting and arming themselves. Aunt Gertrude stood at the corner window, folding her hands. Some talked of enemies being before the gates, others of the Mark-graf.”

“The Mark-graf!” cried Elizabeth. “What of the Mark-graf?”

“The Mark-graf is a noble fellow,” said Henning, “and a good-hearted man, too. What will you bet, if I were to ask him, that he would not be my bridegroom’s man?”

The maiden looked at him with an anxious, but also a sympathizing look: “Henning, how you talk! The people are not wrong who say that they

put something into your head at Spandow. I, who have been your friend from childhood, I should be indeed sorry if you got any such fancy. But you are not foolish. Go away, with your Kurprince for bridegroom's man! Then your bride must be, at the very least, a noble's daughter."

"Go away you, with your noble's daughter! I want no noble's daughter. What I want is a girl out of the town—a maiden with blue eyes and fair hair, like you have. One who carries her head rather high, like you do. That is just as I would have it. Henning's wife must not cast her eyes down. I love her with my whole soul, with my whole heart, and I loved her in the same way when she was so high, and I was so high."

"How foolish!" said Elizabeth, but not in an angry tone. "I know her too, but she will never be yours."

"What will you wager? Come, shake hands—she will be."

"Henning, what do you mean?"

"Your hand."

"Never."

"And I shall have it—I must have it."

"Oh, see how the people are gathering about! Only hear how they are storming!"

"Let them storm! There is a storm, too, within me. Oh, that I had a winged horse!—how I would

spring over the walls ! Oh, that I were as great as Roland yonder, and could touch the clouds with my head ! Would I not cry aloud to all people, ‘Why quarrel ye about a straw ? I am happy !’ I would grasp with one hand the tower of Saint Nicholas, and with the other Saint Peter’s, and bend them together, like two willow twigs.”

“Henning, you are raving !”

“I am not raving ! Have I not you before me ? But your father !—your father will not be here soon ?”

“They are ringing the alarm-bells ! What is the matter ? My father is away !”

“I am with you. Do you know how many friends I have ? I need but whistle, and they will come in hosts. I should like to see who would harm you or me. Not that I am the wild Henning I was once—no, no, I am a sober, sensible man. Oh, you will see curious things in me ! All I do, all I speak, will be for you ! I shall bring you and your father honour, and myself too ! And who knows, if the Mark-graf chooses——. In my house you shall be like a queen. My house ! Oh, don’t think I mean the little paltry house, with its narrow doorway. I shall build one on my ground in Stralow-street, one that will bear measuring against the biggest round Saint Mary’s. It shall have an entrance between two large pillars, and two saints

cut in wood to carry the lintel, and you shall be led in with pipe and tabor, with song and melody."

"Poor Henning!"

"Poor! I am rich—richer even than I thought. I have been casting it over all the night. I never troubled myself to reckon it up before. But now it is another thing. Hans Rathenow's daughter must have nothing to be ashamed of. I am not going into taverns again, not going to run after mummers, not to wear the cap and bells again, nor run about, shouting and whistling. I am going to be a steady, sober, good citizen, all for the sake of my dear, dear, beautiful wife."

But now the girl collected herself, and her bosom swelled. She fixed upon him a steady eye, but her proud look could not disguise a feeling of sympathy.

"Henning, it cannot be!"

"Do you not love me?"

"I have always loved you, and love you still, and I wish you all—everything that is good; and if you find a maiden who is worthy of you, I will love her too; and if you will, I will be her bridesmaid."

"But—Elizabeth! dearest, dearest Elizabeth!"

She shook her head: "Go home, Henning; go, and do not be foolish before the people."

He lifted both his hands to his hair, as if he would seek to open his ears, to hear something that seemed impossible to be heard, or to clear his senses to perceive something which seemed not perceptible. A cracked bell could not have sounded more inharmoniously.

“Elizabeth!—if another had said that to me—but you did not say it—you did not; you could not have said it. I cannot have heard right! Oh, speak again!”

“It is so, Henning!”

“What for? It cannot be so! Why foolish? I have eyes, I have ears; I saw it, I heard it, what your father said! Were you false to me, when you nodded your head and squeezed my hand? Was it a lie, when he shook my hand, and told me to come, the sooner the better? Would he deceive me—me, my father’s son, who, at Cremmer Dam—? No, he who would say that of Johannes, is his enemy. He is a man of honour!”

“He means you well, from his very heart; and he told you to come, because he is going to do all he can to get you the ensigncy, because he says you deserve it.”

“The ensigncy!” cried Henning; “the cold flagstaff, instead of the warm hand! The smith, Tydecke, can carry that—the butcher, Beerbom, as well as I. The ensigncy!—Holy Saviour! I will

not have it; no, not now, on any account! I will have you, Elizabeth; I am worthy of you! In deed and in truth! No one can love you from his whole heart as I do—am I not worthy of you? Shew me another who is more so. I am the child of honest parents; not a single bankrupt has there been in my family as far back as we reckon! I have house and home and servants, and no need to lay my hand to work, save I choose. Oh, you must! O God, I know not what! See, Elizabeth! but for you, I had been long ago outside these walls! They are too narrow, too dirty, too dark for me! Worse men than I have made their fortunes in the world. They want people outside; many a one has become a colonel and a general, who has no page in heraldry. Am I worse than one whose father worked at the mash-tub? You, you alone, have withheld me—have chained me here, where I am no one!—You, only you, dearest, dearest Elizabeth! What have I done to deserve this?"

The girl, proudly as she held herself before him, could not help letting fall a tear.

"O God! would that it were otherwise!"

"Is it not otherwise? Have not God and his saints interposed in the matter? Has not your father broken with the Schumms? Do you know, Elizabeth, that has caused me no sorrow? You and Melchior—no, that could never have been!—

no, never! And am I not good enough for your father? Can I not help him, and guard him? Do you know what is going on in the town? Have you heard? Where are his friends? Flown like the wind, because his riches are flown! I—oh, I would—the Rathenows should be great again!—so great, so high, that the proud patri-cians should——”

But now, whilst Henning, in his desperation, was going on further, the girl again regained her self-possession.

“Henning Mollner, my father has friends who are more worthy than yours; Johannes Rathenow needs not such to maintain him.”

“Elizabeth! oh, do not speak in that way. But who are his friends? Where is one heart that beats as true as mine?”

She pointed to the wall hung with old pictures, against which also the family tree hung: “Those are his friends—the Rathenows of old—a noble family, which has kept itself unstained!” And, with a mixture of pride, and of something better, in her manner, she took his hand, and looking him full in the face, she said, “Henning, it cannot be;—in honour and truth I say it—it cannot be! Go, and work, and shew yourself worthy of yourself; but a tradesman’s child cannot marry a patrician—I am a Rathenow!”

"No, no, never!" was all he could utter, as he turned himself round. His whole body trembled, and his manly eye was wet.

"God has ordained it so."

"God! Elizabeth—what has God to do with patricians and low-born?"

"Go!" said Elizabeth, with her head turned away;—"go, before my father comes and hears you."

"He shall hear me!" cried Henning. The blood rushed to his face, the room seemed to go round with him; the alarm bells were ringing loud—he heard them not.

"Blessed Virgin! Do you not hear, Henning? Rebellion!—fire! The town is undone!"

"Let the town be undone! It is but patricians and low-born!"

But just at this moment he could not escape hearing the almost scream of anxiety which Elizabeth uttered, her eye fixed upon the door.

"Henning, I told you!—I told you!" she said, wringing her hands.

"What must I hear?" shouted a voice; and Johannes Rathenow, the burgomaster, stood amongst them. The aspect he wore was terrible; his face was glowing red, the veins on his forehead were swollen high, deep wrinkles were in his brow, and stern resolution played about his lips.

As the pair were silent, he cried, "Mad boy! I have heard it, and I would I had not heard it! Is this the time? To the streets!—to the streets, all who love the towns!"

Henning had heard the words, but not caught the sense. The word "love" was all he had heard. "Herr Rathenow," he said, clasping his hands—"my more than father!—you who have loved me, though I am a tradesman's child, speak, oh, speak! Is what Elizabeth says your meaning?"

"She spoke as my child should; she spoke well. Are you a man—your father's son—to stand, like a woman, begging and crying? Love!—trash! whilst the walls are ringing with the sound of the enemy! Can I alter it that she is patrician born?"

"I do not tremble—I am no woman! Can you not alter it? I cannot live without Elizabeth; I must have her!"

"Must—must?—Sir, boy, fool! Would you eat iron, and fetch down the moon?"

"Say it once more!"

"I say, then, until Roland springs from his pedestal, and traverses the town, my daughter you shall not have, as true as I am the son of my father! Have you heard that?"

Henning stood for a moment motionless as the statue itself. But then he cast a glance at Elizabeth, and his lips whispered—"And you?"

She spoke, and she meant it well ; but it rasped through his heart like a saw—"Be a man, Henning!—the stone will never go away!"

He raised himself up, and shook himself, as if to prove that he was not of stone. With both hands he grasped the air ; he cast one long look of hate, desire, love, at the girl ; a second look at the father, and rushed forth.

But previous to this—that is, before the burgo-master returned to his house—many things had taken place, which we must narrate in another chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE senate-house, as we said before, was already almost full of senators and spectators, when the burgomaster and his friends made their way into the council chamber. The emergency was now known to all, and so many serious faces had seldom, if ever, been seen together. It must be said to their credit, that to-day the meeting bore no resemblance to a Polish diet—there was no shouting nor interruption of any kind; when one spoke the others listened. It seemed as if for once good counsel was at a premium in the senate.

On the landing of the stairs, half way up, stood Herr Bartholomew Schumm, puffing, for he had hurried himself in coming, and the stairs were very perpendicular. He rested himself, half sitting, half leaning against the skirting-board, propping himself on his gold-headed walking staff.

As Johannes came up, he looked at him for a moment, and then, taking one hand from the head of his cane, he stretched it out to him.

“ God be with you, Johannes.”

“ And with you, Bartholomew ; I am glad to see you,” answered Herr Johannes.

And they remained awhile looking one another in the face. At last, the burgomaster said, “ I thought we were not to see one another again ; but necessity has no laws, and it re-unites friendships which were broken.”

“ Pooh !” said Herr Bartholomew ; “ I know of nought that is broken. If the women fall out a bit together, why should the men care about that ?”

“ Thanks, thanks,” said Herr Johannes ; “ I thought that you had been hurt by something.”

“ Me ! When a flea bites me, I catch it ; if a gnat stings me, I kill it ; if a bug creeps on me, I crush it. What else is there could hurt Bartholomew Schumm ?”

After looking at one another, half smilingly, for another moment, they squeezed each other's hands, and went up the rest of the steps, side by side. They who saw them were glad, even Herr Mathis Blankenfelde ; though not exactly glad, yet it was not altogether disagreeable to him, for every one loves his town, though he be double-dealing and

quarrelsome, and would fain go a crooked way about things.

"This will be a hard day," said Herr Johannes, as they got to the head of the stairs.

Bartholomew grumbled something unintelligibly.

"He has iron teeth," said the burgomaster.

"Church mice," grumbled the other; "we must shut our barns against them."

On their entering the room, everybody rose up to make way for them; and, as if there had been no complaint against him, nor any accusation written, nor any occurrence on the Monday after Estomihi, all made way when the burgomaster proceeded to his own place, and when he rose, it was so silent that a pin falling would have been heard.

"God and his blessed saints be with us and with our towns! Ye are acquainted with what is coming upon us."

Many now answered, "We know about it;" others cried out "Speak!—read!" and there was great anxiety displayed.

The burgomaster now read Niclas Pernewitz's letter, written in great haste from Brandenburg, letting them know that the Mark-graf, after hearing the complaints of both parties, the Berlin and the Koeln people, the patricians and the commonalty,

had taken secret counsel with his nobles and councillors, and had determined that he would endure such a state of things no longer; that they must either bend or be broken; that he would tear asunder the bond that united the two towns; and take from them the rule which they knew not how to hold, save to their common disgrace. That he had shut the gates of Spandow, in order that the news might not be carried out, it being his intention to ride with man and horse and demand the keys of the city as lord of the land. And how the Ritters had rejoiced, and all the councillors assented to the rightfulness of his doing so, and all the princes who were his guests had congratulated him on his decision, being as glad as if it were an expedition against the Turks. He, Niclas Pernewitz, had gained the information from a friend about the court, and had instantly written by express. Monday after *Reminiscere* was to be the day on which the Prince had sworn to ride before the town, and he had sworn also not to doff his armour until the gates were opened and the keys in his possession.

But the burgomaster could not finish the letter for the noise which arose on all sides. On one side, anger and fury—on the other, alarm and affright; but the towns were for once agreed, the Spree was no longer a boundary betwixt them.

Amongst the courageous, the first, as we may suppose, was Pawel Strabant. He had come ready, with a cuirass on his breast, and a shirt of mail over it, a steel helmet on his head, and his long sword by his side. It was, we know, not the proper dress to appear in the senate in; but who would remark such a thing to-day. He half drew his sword, and letting it rattle back again into its sheath, he cried out—

“Then he may rot in his armour!”

Many said the same; but others whispered that the town was not prepared for the siege, and that the Mark-graf indeed was the lord of the land.

“And what need has he to besiege us?” asked one of the rich men of Koeln. “All our goods are abroad on the water or the axle; he has but to lay his hands on them, and he has us.”

“But we,” cried Pawel, “we will lay hand upon you now. Then it will not be he that has you, but we.”

“Peace! silence! order!” Pawel’s own friends sought to pacify him; but he was not to be pacified. He kept on cursing the Koeln people, whose fault it was—they having appealed to the Kurprince.

“Who was the first to send?” asked Herr Hop-

penrade. "The trades, whom ye have been dandling, and putting it into their heads."

"It is ye!" cried the Koeln party in a body. "Ye have let them complain; ye bid patricians accompany them; it is ye who are our accusers!"

Herr Johannes now struck his staff upon the table, and they around lending him their aid, the disputing parties were separated, cries of "Order" rising on every side.

"By all the blessed patrons of our towns! but one moment, good sirs, give me a hearing—then it is for you to judge. It is not to-day a matter of the surgeon Joris, nor the town-clock, nor the groshens in your purses; it is the town, the common weal!—your all, your rights, your freedom, your existence! By the Almighty God! there is to-day no time for words, much less for quarrelling!"

And as all were now attentive, he moved a step forward, and all pressed around him.

"In case of fire, the nearest rushes to assist, not asking whether it be the house of friend or foe, for a fire in a neighbour's house may also burn mine. When the floods break through the dikes, friend and foe dig side by side, and he who hangs by the willow asks not, when a boat comes, to whom it belongs. You of Koeln have accused me; but

be it so. The towns to day must have a head, or they are no longer one—they are two, and then all is over. Is your complaint just, I yield to it. Choose, then, another burgomaster, and I, Johannes Rathenow, swear now, before old and new council, before the spirits of our fathers, I will obey him as the meanest of his servants. Speak, then, speak! but at once!—the glass is running out whilst ye are seeking breath.”

“I know nought of the accusation,” said Herr Bartholomew Schumm.

A murmur went through the room—no one spoke a word.

“Item, there is no such thing; and Herr Johannes is burgomaster as he was before,” said Herr Schumm. And it was enough, for who would have ventured to bring any accusation as long as the Rathenows and the Schumms were united. So from all sides the cry arose, “Something must be done—away with the old quarrels.”

And now a different expression lit up the face of Herr Johannes, and without rising from his chair, he said, “I have already done what in me lies. With the will and consent of the towns, I have ordered the trades to the gates and on to the walls; I have dispatched trusty people to the towers to sound the alarm when it shall be time to do so; I

have opened the armory of old Berlin, and posted the armorer to give out the arms; but dispute my right, or decide upon yielding—then it is in God's hand—only speak!"

And with one voice they cried out, "It is in God's hand,—no yielding!" But yet, all said it not, it only seemed so; the voices of the silent ones were not heard. But it often happens, that they who are silent mean the most, and their time comes sooner or later.

But they who did speak over-shouted one another: "No yielding!—no submission!"

"To arms, to arms! he must learn to know what the towns can do."

"We are what our fathers were."

Konrad Ryke shook his head: "We are not what our fathers were," he said, in a subdued tone. "God's pity it is! Had we been as they, we should not have quarrelled, but provided ourselves against this. He has spies in the towns, and knows where our weak points are."

"And let him have ten thousand eyes!" shouted Pawel Strobant; "if ye be but men, he shall see nought save his own disgrace."

But there began just now to be a great confusion, for some one appeared at the door who had something to communicate, and the crowd pressed round him, and the burgomaster held up his hands

in vain. He had asked the question, "What was to be the answer to the Mark-graf should he demand the keys?" Some of the burgomaster's enemies cried out "Let him answer him who sent for him." But they at the door now shouted out, "Do ye not hear? they are arming in the Old Court and in the Cloister-street!" "Enemies within the walls." And the bells were already ringing from Saint Mary's, and answered from the tower of Saint Nicholas, and again on the side of Koeln from Saint Peter's. It was now too late for words—the crowd rushed hither and thither, like a flock of sheep when the wolf is amongst them, the dogs barking, and the shepherds running to and fro without knowing in what direction to go.

"To the Grey Friars—to the Old Court!" shouted the burgomaster; and the Ritter Ruthnik nodded to him, whilst the Ritter Britzke ordered the drums to beat, as Herr Johannes gave order, "On your own heads be it, let not one out from the Mark-graf's house."

"And on my head be it, too!" shouted Pawel Strobant. "We will draw a wall round them, so that they shall choke inside." Had it been left to him, he had certainly stormed the Mark-graf's house, which might have been the cause of much unhappiness to the towns.

Yes, had Johannes Rathenow not been there,

and Konrad Ryke and Bartholomew Schumm, there would have been worse done than that. One wanted to have this done, and another that—it was plain that the thing had come upon them unexpectedly, as a flash of lightning would have done when the sky was clear. Each one had his place for the defence of the town, forgetting that in the town itself was lodged their fellest enemy—namely, their divisions, and the bad feeling of the one to the other, and many other things about which it were better to be silent.

And if the gentry whom we have named above, had not been ready to lay hand to the work, who can tell what would have happened, for the senator whose duty it would have been to take the charge, was not in the senate, he was not even in the town, but away at the Frankfort fair. Every one had his own word to say, and his own proposal to make; but when it came to the performance, there was always some hindrance, and when each went to his place, there were two or three there already, and nobody in other places. Then, too, a few had remained where they were, taking further counsel amongst themselves, just like women, who, when a thing is determined on, have still this and that to say, wanting to begin again from the beginning, as if nothing had been done. It is God's pity, but it too often is so.

Herr Mathis Blankenfelde was one who had made a fuss, as if the towns' weal was more to him than all the world; but now that the burgomaster was away—and it was only then that he felt himself at all at ease—he put on quite a different face. Bergholz, and the Wyns, and Otto Buch were there still, for Hoppenrade was gone away to do his duty.

“Notwithstanding all this,” said he, shrugging his shoulders, “what shall we be able to do if the matter becomes serious? No doubt we are in the right; nor can I blame Herr Johannes—God forbid! it is very praiseworthy and very brave. But with all that, they who are in the right, and cannot carry the thing through, are not in the right, for they may lose more than they have a chance to win.”

“We ought to open the gate for him, then,” said Thomas Wyns.

“God forbid that I should say so, when the senate has decided otherwise! But still he is the Mark-graf, the lord of the land,—and who are we?”

“Very truly spoken,” said Otto Buch.

“Subjection is a very unpleasant word,” said one of the party present.

“That is what I say. Revolt is also an ugly word—you understand, I mean only for the one

who loses the day. If a man is certain of winning, he is right, of course. Are we certain?"

The anxiety of Thomas Wyns was too perceptible. His laden boats, his vineyards, and his new buildings in Barnim, with their gay tile roofs—his stables at Straussberg.

"Saint Maurice! it would be dreadful if the Mark-graf treated us as enemies."

"And what are we to prop ourselves upon?" continued Blankenfelde, speaking lower, and looking around him cautiously. "Into whose hand are we given? Will the senate number sufficient to man the walls? If our villages are cut off, where shall we get people? We are in the hands of the trades—their will is our law. Look at the shoemakers, the coppersmiths, the tanners, the dyers. Should the butchers come to sit on these benches, good Heavens! I think it might be worse than if we had the Mark-graf."

"And from whom," said Otto Buch, "do you hold your estates in fee? The Mark-graf. And who is there behind the Mark-graf? The other princes, the Emperor, and the state. You have seen and experienced what it is for the weaker to stand against the stronger, even when the right is on his side. Were we of the nobility less in the right than you? Good friends, everybody has

his day, and he who is strong comes in contact with the stronger, and then it is all over with him. There is nothing more to be said in that case about who is right, but about who is the sharpest; and he is the wisest who succumbs when his time is come. The one who comes too late, gets shut behind the door."

Whilst this was going on, each having his word to say, they were interrupted by a noise from outside. Though it was distant, yet everybody knew what it was, and every face turned pale.

CHAPTER XV.

THE heavens, as we have said before, were obscured by a heavy mist. So much the more dolefully and fearfully sounded the tolling of the bells from the church towers, and the rolling of the drums. And so it often happens, not only are the people themselves struck with blindness, when a commonwealth is about to fall, so that they run into the very arms of danger, but Nature herself trembles, the more to impel misguided men to their ruin. It was so in Jerusalem of old, it was so in Babylon, and in Troy, and now in Berlin it was to be the same. The Trojans saw not what was in the belly of the horse. They viewed the appearance with idle curiosity, and if another such horse had appeared, the Berlin people would have done the like. It was owing to their being blind and misguided that the good King Priam, and all his

ancient house, and the children themselves of the good town of Troy were carried away and sold into slavery. Surely, it is a heart-breaking reflection that all that is great and glorious must in its turn again become dust; it cannot last for ever. And so it was with Berlin and Koeln, which might well have become as mighty as Nürnberg, or Lubeck, or Venice.

How they rushed about, here and there, the armed men, and the unarmed, men and women, old men and children. Everybody wanted to know what was going on; for none who were sworn in by the towns were sworn in to keep their own counsel. Why should I engage anybody to speak for me, when I know what he is going to say? Why should I place an attorney to dispose and rule over what is mine, as were it his own, and I no one in the world? Surely, it were better I let things go their own way. Our forefathers were, to be sure, somewhat loud, and rude, and stubborn. Yes, truly, and they had need to be so. Sugared words, and steps like a French dancing-master's, were in those times of little avail.

The town was in danger—that was to be read upon every face. The most, too, were already aware of the approach of the Mark-graf; but what he wanted only very few knew. What had the Mark-graf to do with them? He was lord of the land,

but not lord of the towns, and this the patricians told the people not without effect. The most of the tradespeople perceived it well enough, and that the safety of the town depended upon them. Had it come to a storming of the town, there would certainly have been much effusion of blood, and the Mark-graf would hardly have got into the town that day.

Whilst, then, all was going on in great confusion, each advising with and influencing the other, as he best could, there stood up a man at the corner of a street, and addressed the passers by: "Has the senate, whom you call your enemy, a strong citadel in the town? Has it built itself a castle? Have the patricians towers and strongholds, from whence to defy the citizens? Do they not, on the contrary, live openly amongst you? Is not the smith, is not the butcher, the patrician's next door neighbour? Do not their walls and roofs join on together? Think you that, if ye change the patricians for the Mark-graf, that he and his Ritters will be as good neighbours? Will not they turn up their dainty noses at your tallow-meltings, at the runnings from your butcher's stalls? Many of you rejoice at the thought of the court being amongst you. I know towns, whose citizens rejoiced too, and entreated the princes to come and live amongst them. Go, now, and ask

where are their liberties ! The smiths are driven outside, the butchers into corners under the walls, the tanners and soap-boilers must clear away from palace and court, because the fine noses of the courtiers cannot endure the stink. A house here did not please the prince, it interfered with the prospect from his windows ; it must be pulled down, and how, and where the citizens in future may build must be pointed out to them. The streets, too, must all be paved. At last, too, it came into their heads that the pavements must be even, so the stonemason had to go to work on them. The pig-sties, too, must be away from before the doors. Only think of that. They mightn't even make a fire before their doors, nor hammer their pans, nor mend their shoes. Next came an order to take the signs from before the doors, to take down the water-spouts, and more such like. It was pointed out to them, too, not just at once, but little by little, that they had nothing to say in the towns, it was for the prince and the court alone to do it. Gay houses had to be built, bridges, fountains, towers ; but they had to pay scot for them. God knows where this prince stopped—not where the patricians did certainly, though they had been accused of robbing the town's treasury—for the prince gave the keys into the hands of his chamberlain. The citizens had complained

that no account had been given them by the patricians. Where were the accounts now? There went one and asked for them at the prince's chancery. What did they do? They put him in prison, and accused him of high treason. In a word, the citizens had fine houses, not as they would have had them, but as the prince would. They were no longer plagued by their patricians, but their own mouths they durst not open; and when they walked their own streets, it was not with a firm foot, as you do, for the ground they trod on was not theirs, but the prince's; and the air they breathed was not theirs, but the prince's. They were taught it in the schools till they believed it. One word more: They complained of, and deposed their patrician rulers for interfering with their rights, as they said, but now they have no rights at all, and are no longer free citizens, but only live and exist in the towns during pleasure, in those very towns which their fathers built, and their fathers bore rule in."

It does not stand written in the chronicles who it was that made this speech, nor what effect it had upon the hearers. Perhaps but a very few heard it, for who can listen to speech-making when the storm bells are ringing. Where Pawel Strobant was, and Konrad Ryke, and the burgomaster, and others of the more resolute, the old quarrels were all for-

gotten, and every one was kindling with anxiety to mount the walls. Not a few of them forgot altogether that they themselves had written to the Mark-graf; butchers and tanners, weavers and dyers, all shouted with one accord for the town and the senate.

Yes, had it been light enough, that they might have signalized with one another plainly, and had the senate been united in itself, and one worked into the hands of the other, its government might have endured yet many a long day. If Pawel Strobant had been sent to the Spandow gate, instead of into the Cloister-street, where he had nought to do but to keep watch; had he been posted there the Prince might well have had to wait a while outside; but the butchers were there, and were the only guild who seemed to know what they were doing; for the tailors, who had been good enough at talking, were running about with their hands in their pockets, half shaken by such speeches as the one we have heard above; and the shoemakers were cut off from their companions, and could not get through, much as Balzer did to get them up; as for himself, it was easy to see that he wanted to get as far from the gate as he could, and from the butchers.

“There are too few of us here,” whispered Bartz Kühlemeij; “the cry is all the other way.”

“Have you no throats?”

“Dry ones!—the senate’s people have given out drink.”

Balzer snarled out, “Had we but Henning with us!”

“Had you but arranged it better! You should have had men at every corner, to over-shout the senate’s people.”

Balzer Boytin smiled ironically: “Take the business as it is, good master; it often appears to me as if precaution and calculation were all nothing. He who seeks money, does not find it, but it flows of itself into the mouth of the fool. The ass does not rid him of his load, though his driver strike him ever so; but let him be suddenly startled, and off go both man and pack. Accident has the most to do in matters of this sort, and something tells me that it will be so now.”

He had scarcely spoken the words, when a loud blast of trumpets shook the very air. Flags were waving, hauberks glittering, fifty trumpets opening their brazen mouths at once, echoing from the walls and towers, and their sound sent back again from the neighbouring woods. Inside, and now outside the walls also, the confusion of noises was enough to strike fear into the heart of the bravest. The trampling of horse-hoofs upon the frozen snow, the rattling of steel and iron, and the neighing of

a thousand horses ; and, as if owing to the noise of the trumpets and the trampling, the sky broke here and there over head, and the mist drew away, to lodge more densely in the dark pine-woods, and the sun burst out and glittered on the array of steel, and shone once more upon the roofs of Berlin, as if to take its last leave of a free town.

From the day when the walls were first built, neither Berlin nor Koeln had seen such an array before their walls ; for, when Waldemar the False approached them, the senators went out to meet him, and conduct him in with song and music, therefore his entry was not unfriendly ; and of the Hussites, when they ravaged the land, but very small parties made their appearance at different times before the Oderberg gate, a shower of arrows had always given them sufficient answer ; and in the olden times, when the Bavarians had the upper hand, or when Lebuser brought the Poles and the pagan Lithuanians into the land, God shield us, they never ventured to the large towns,—they murdered and pillaged in the open country. It was then that so many of the neighbouring nobility entered the towns, and let their coats-of-arms be chiselled in the walls. But now, six hundred harnessed knights, in steel from head to foot, their horses the same—man and horse with plumes of heron feathers, splendid housings over their horses,

and shirts of mail over their own harness, were drawn up before the Spandow gate—a hundred banners waving over head, and fifty trumpeters in coloured garments, blowing their trumpets, as if their lungs were about to burst. Then, too, the hundreds of squires, with all that appertained in the way of stores, and the horses prancing in their pride. It was a fair sight for those who could enjoy it; and in the midst, the Mark-graf riding on his white charger, surrounded by princes and prelates. What would one not give to see such a sight?

“See, the storks are peeping from their nests!” said one of the Ritters, as some of the burgesses appeared on the walls with pikes and steel caps.

On gaining the door, the train stood still, and the Prince turned him half round: “It is shut,” said he; and his eye dwelt upon the gentlemen of the town and the burgesses who had borne the writing and been detained by him. “Sirs,” he said, “ye would have me in there, to sit and judge between ye, and ye see the gates are not open.”

The tradesfolks answered not a word, nor dared to lift their eyes, so stern and noble was his gaze.

“Your Grace,” said one of the patricians of Koeln, “as we never know, in these troublous times, who is friend, or who is foe, our gates are ever kept shut, till the comer announces that he comes as a friend.”

"Then I have to be announced," said the Kurprince, and his eye glistened ominously.

One of his knights immediately rode forward at his nod, taking two trumpeters. They blew a blast, and the knightly herald then announced aloud—

"Ye senators and citizens of our good towns, Berlin and Koeln, Herr Frederick the Other, your gracious master, Mark-graf of Brandenburg, and Kurprince of the Holy Roman Empire, gives ye greeting, and lets ye know hereby that he is come to adjust your differences, and is now at your gates."

A moment's silence followed, the horses did not snort, nor did even the harnesses rattle; but in the inside there was discordant noise enough of murmuring and disputing, like the noise of the sea upon a sea wall. The knights looked at one another, and again to the wall; the Mark-graf alone sat motionless. Like a statue cast in metal, he sat upon his charger, with his eye fixed upon the nail-studded portals; one of the knights whispered—it was the Graf Knipprode—"Just as I said; axes, not keys, must open that door!"

"God grant it be not so!" answered the Prince; and he pointed to the walls, where three senators now made their appearance. In the middle was Konrad Ryke, who came to the front, and leant over the battlements.

“It rejoiceth the towns much that his gracious highness the Mark-graf is come at the request of some of us, to adjust our differences; the senators, therefore, humbly ask if it be his will that the senate come out to him, and lay before him, with all humility, the cases in dispute; or otherwise, if it please his gracious highness, and his councillors, to ride within our gates, the senate will then open the doors to admit the Prince, his councillors, such as he will name, and his immediate suite.”

“Holy Mother of God!” cried the Baron Voss, “they count us out like sheep, then, before the gate!”

“Your lord and ruler, the Mark-graf, requires and demands of you,” answered the herald, in a louder voice, “that, as ye are his subjects, ye open your gates, that he may ride in, bringing with him such as he will, and leaving behind him such as he will.”

To which Konrade Ryke made answer, “Peace and welfare rest upon his gracious highness! May he live long, and God defend his right! But it is not his right, but ours, to let in such only as the senate will, and such only as the senate have bidden.”

At this, the knights who were the nearest, reined in their steeds, and gave vent to many an oath and imprecation; and Otto Pfuel the younger

whirled his battle-axe round his head, and flung it with such true aim, that Konrade Ryke's days had been nearly numbered; as it was, it struck the wall just beneath where he leant, and its force shivered away a large fragment from the wall.

The noise now grew great, outside as well as inside. The bells could no longer be heard amidst the noise. Ten lance points rang at once against the gate: "Open, ye within! Has the Prince, then, no friends in the town?"

But to have beheld the prince would have astonished anybody. He, who was always so energetic and ready of council, he remained sitting like a statue upon his horse, bending slightly to one side, and his eyes fixed as if beholding a spirit. But for this seeming torpor, he would have at once taken the command, and directed his men aright, for he was not one that liked a wordy war.

Within the gates there was also one who wielded the axe, but it was the axe of a butcher. Klaus Martinecke stood at the corner, attempting to excite the people, as Bartz Kuhlemey and Balzer Boytin had been doing. Klaus was a shaken-brained fellow, always drunk, quarrelling and fighting every day with his wife, to the annoyance of his neighbours, and the injury of his business. But, after drinking, when they let him speak in any meeting, he was like a squirrel in its wheel, or a tiger in its

cage. This man was now swinging his axe, and yelling at the butchers and others, calling them every name, if they neglected the opportunity of getting in the Mark-graf, or stood listening to the senate :—

“Oh, ye green, grey, yellow asses! Will ye forever remain stockfishes? Will ye listen ever to their sense-deceiving words! Who is it that has over-ridden you, triumphing in your stupidity, buying your eyesight at the price of a farthing? Before the door there stands one who is a master. Will ye list to the old tale again, that the patri-cians are your fathers? Will you let them tell you again, that ye are fighting against yourselves? The lie stinks. Do ye not smell it? Murder and fire, no tarrying! Now, brethren, no tarrying! Our good friend stands outside the door; open it, and let him in! Break the bars! Down with them!”

“Down with the bars! Open!—open with the door! Long life to the Mark-graf!”

Some hundred voices raised the cry, and Bartz Kuhlemey shouted aloud :—

“The Mark-graf has sworn that if ye hear him not he will raze the towns to the ground! He will strew salt upon their ashes! He is a fool who shuts in an enemy, and shuts out a friend. Open with the doors!”

“Here with the keys! Down with the senate!”

To be sure the butchers were good people, and not very pleasant to come in contact with, with their strong arms and bodies. But with all that they were not competent to do it. There was too great a crush of the senate's people at the gate. They could not make their way to it. There were too many, too, who were undecided. Just then, there sounded a voice which everybody recognised: "Open them!" and, with the aspect of a madman, Henning rushed amongst them. His eyes were rolling, and his face was deathly pale. He had no cap on his head, and his hair fell about him like one drunken. His huge body trembled, and even his friends started back as they saw him. Passing the corner, he tore the axe out of Claus Martinecke's hand, and waved it over his head, shouting, "The axe is for blows, not for tongue-talk!" How every body made way for him, may well be believed!

"God! what is that?" cried Herr Hoppenrade. "Ritter Ruthnik! instantly with your lances! He is forcing the gate!"

"Henning!" shouted the burgomaster.

The crashing of blows was heard, the fall of heavy metal, the rattling of the bolts. A cry of anxiety and of rage, of exultation and despair. "Long life to the Mark-graf!" "Down with the senate!" "Honour to the trades!" "The people for ever!"

The gates opened. Helm and armour appeared in the opening, and before the horses' heads the multitude gave way. The crowd bore back all behind it.

"This is no place for us—it is too late. Let us go, Herr Johannes Rathenow." It was Hoppenrade who said this, dragging away the burgo-master. Konrad Ryke followed them, wringing his hands, the blood flowing from his cheek. "It is all over!"

CHAPTER XVI.

So many trumpeters together had never blown blast within the walls of Berlin. The windows rattled. The glancing of the steel reflected even to the very roofs. Not an eye was there but strove to see the sight. Though the most of them saw, perhaps, little more than a succession of waving heron feathers.

It was all over. There was no thought any longer of resistance. There was nothing but the desire to see. Meanwhile, from mouth to mouth ran the words: "The Mark-graf is very angry." "The Mark-graf is a good man." Young mothers held up their children at the breasts to see the master over all, and grandmothers and grandfathers hobbled out, or were carried to their doors to watch him pass.

And soon the muteness of astonishment gave place to shouts of welcome and congratulation, and

from window to window ran the cry: "Long life to our gracious Mark-graf!" "Away with the old senate!" On reaching the open place at the end of Spandow-street, he found a great many of the guild tradesmen, having amongst them the oldest and worthiest of the burgher class. And they received him with shouts, and waving of flags and colours, whilst some of the elder ones, with venerable white heads, approached to his horse's bridle, and told of the oppression of the patricians, and of olden times, (just as such old folks always do,) when everything had been otherwise, when the patricians had not had the sole power, but the tradesfolks also had had place in the senate, and how good the lords of the land had been to them, bestowing on them liberties and privileges. Just then, one of them lifted up high a bonny little child, and said, "Look at our gracious Prince, the noble Mark-graf, he who is about to restore the good old times!" And, with that, an universal shout arose, and in every woman's eyes might be seen tears of emotion.

The Prince fixed an earnest look on the child, and spoke, "If it is so, that ye will be good and faithful subjects unto me, as ye were to the princes before me, then will I be unto you as they were, and will grant you my favour, and what else is necessary to you, and I will take care that there be no

longer strife or contention between ye, and will heal the wounds which your divisions have caused. And ye shall be to me my good Berliners, and my good Koelnern, if so be that ye put your trust in me, and be submissive and obedient, as is this child to its father."

And with that he put out his hand to caress the infant, but it was frightened by his iron glove, and cried and struggled; but the burgesses shouted, and exulted, and the women now actually wept aloud.

On his way to the senate-house, on the Long Bridge, a party of the senators came forward to meet him; not with shouting, nor with the head held proudly up. They were also but few. Mathis Blankenfelde, the alderman of Koeln, walked at their head. He carried the keys of the town on a velvet cushion, and as the prince approached, he sunk upon his knee, and held up the cushion, saying, "May your highness be gracious unto us."

The Prince allowed him to remain awhile kneeling, and then fixing his glance upon him, he said, abruptly, "Ye come late."

The Duke of Pomerania said: "It used to be the fashion to proffer the keys outside the gate, and not inside."

He of Anhalt said, with a laugh, "The crowd was too great; they could not get through, perhaps."

"Ye see, gracious princes," said Buffo Voss, "they tremble, and are quite pale with joy ; it has come too unexpected."

"Are ye the entire senate ?" asked the Kur-prince, seeing that they were so few.

"We are such of them as mean well to the town and to your gracious highness," answered Blankenfelde.

"And where are the others ?"

"We have been long at variance as you will have known, noble sir."

"Ye have sent me word of it, and, as ye are at variance, I shall separate ye that ye be content."

"Your highness's will is wisdom," said Blankenfelde, "and we obey."

"And with good heed, I hope," answered the prince. "Where is the burgomaster of Berlin ? I do not see Johannes Rathenow."

"We of the senate had accused and deposed him, because he handled with his single hand. In so doing, too, he kept the wall with others of the citizens, and excited them to close the gates."

"And where were ye ?"

"We were in council in the senate-house—how we might turn away the anger of your gracious highness, whom wicked persons, without fault of ours, have invited to our towns."

“And right long ye sat in council, so long that I was within the gate.”

And he then received the keys, and gave them to his chancellor, and made a sign to the senate to stand up, and the whole train took its way onward to the Long Bridge. There reigned a perfect quiet in the front of the council-house, notwithstanding that the others of the senate, and the patricians, the provost and the heads of the church, and also the seniors of the guilds, were collected there. All doffed their bonnets, but not one opened his lips. The Mark-graf looked at them, as it were, one by one, but he gave them no greeting. He dismounted from his horse, and at his nod, the princes, and nobles, and the senators, followed him within the house, and mounted the stairs to the chamber. The Prince stood in the centre of the hall; he did not sit down on the chair of state which they offered him, but remained standing leaning on his sword.

“Ye have bidden me; I am here: ye have sent for me as arbiter, and it is my will to separate you; ye have given me your keys, I am, therefore, lord of your town; ye cannot serve two masters. The senate is from this moment no longer the senate, and he who was its head is so no longer. Johannes Rathenow, thou who wert burgomaster over

the two towns, stand forth before thy lord and master !”

Johannes came forward, and bent his head, but without speaking. And as the Prince measured him from head to foot, with a proud and somewhat angry look, no feature of his face altered, but his eye met the Prince’s fully.

“ They tell me thou hast stirred up the towns, and instigated the citizens to mutiny against their masters.”

“ Gracious Prince ! I did what I was bound to do, being lawfully chosen burgomaster of both towns.”

“ What didst thou ?” interrupted the Prince, sternly ; and he clashed the point of his sword upon the ground. He expected to have startled him.

“ I did as your highness would have done yourself, had you been in my place,” answered Johannes, with a voice so calm that the hearers were startled, and Blankenfelde and his set assumed a malicious air, expecting a burst of rage from the Prince. A remarkable expression did, indeed, flit momentarily over the Prince’s brow, as he gazed upon the speaker more proudly than before, but there was no anger in his eye.

“ Johannes Rathenow,” said he, after a moment,

“thou art no longer burgomaster, yet thou wearest still the chain round thy neck. Give back the chain, unless thou wouldst be guilty of high-treason.”

Johannes raised his hand to the chain ; and now for the first time he trembled and turned pale.

“On the knee !” cried the nobles ; and he knelt and handed the burgomaster’s chain to the prince.

To himself he said—“The dream has come true !” and he stood there like one condemned, no friend at his side, and his enemies looking at him rejoicing at his humiliation.

And now the Prince’s councillors spread themselves round the tables, with rolls of parchment, and inkhorns, and pens, and at their head sat the chancellor Johannes, and took account of each senator, and the heads of the guilds, and the president of the corporations. Every one had to make his declaration. There was more written that day than had been written altogether in both towns since they were built.

Each, after signing his name, and answering what was asked of him, was bidden to come the ensuing day, and then dismissed. The Mark-graf and the princes were not busied in writing, but were standing about the windows. Afterwards,

there were brought them refreshments, all that could be found of venison and good wines, and they sat them down and laughed merrily, and said many a thing not pleasant to the ear of a townsman.

But the Mark-graf had drawn the Prince of Anhalt to a window, and was pointing to him the place beyond the river where Hans Ferbitz's booth stood. "There," said he, "cousin, I shall build my house."

"And is it to be called Zwing*-Berlin, or Zwing-Koeln."

"It must earn its own name."

"It is not a high ground, cousin ; no hill.

"I will build it that it be a hill, as a rock which shall stand for ever ; for I have an affection for these towns, cousin." He said this with a smile, which the Prince of Anhalt was at a loss to interpret.

The next day (it was the 26th of February, 1442) every person that had limbs might have been seen, at the hour of noon, hurrying towards the senate-house, though but few of the commonalty could get very near it, for the streets were kept by the nobles and the knights. Had any one loved the

* This is untranslatable. Zwingen is to compel, or coerce.

towns he would surely have shut himself in his house, and mourned in sackcloth and ashes ; but so it is ever with mankind, and particularly in Berlin. Had it been the Grand Turk, crying by his herald that their women and children should be driven into his harem, and the tithe of the men sold into slavery, they would still have gone to see, covering the roofs and hanging on the masts of the boats ; it would have been something new.

From the balcony of the senate-house the chancellor read aloud the new decree ; meanwhile the prince and his friends, with the patricians of the town, stood by him.

The beginning of it was a confession of the bad working of the system existing till then, and how the senate and the commonalty, in consequence, had sent for the lord of the land (whose titles and claims were fully detailed), that he might choose and ordain for them another senate, and also one for each town, that jealousy, and confusion, and dispute, might be avoided now and for ever.

The decree was a very long one, but a deep silence reigned whilst it was being read. Such part of it as was most important, we must give. It ran thus :—

“ And so also, be it decreed, that when the senates and burgomasters, as chosen by the prince, shall have held rule one year, then shall such

senates, as especially for Berlin, and as especially for Koeln, choose and elect other sober, well-meaning people, more particularly from amongst the four guilds, and from amongst the common people, and do the same to the best of their judgment, being on their oaths.

“The senates, however, shall not elect their own near of kin, nor such as are in their private interests,* such being likely to be sorely prejudicial to the towns.

“The newly chosen shall present themselves either before the Mark-graf himself, or his highest officer then in the Mark, and entreat him that he ratify such choice by word of mouth or by writing.

“Should it be so, however, that any of the so chosen be not convenient to the higher powers in anything that they may have in hand, the names of such may be struck out, and others set in their places, the senates and burgesses having no voice in the matter, nor any senate having right or validity till it be ratified as above.

“Also, that all bonds and treaties which the burgomaster, and senate, and their forefathers, have entered into hitherto, either in the Mark or beyond it, be null and void from this day and for ever.

* “Keynen befrunden Rath nicht Kesen oder setzen.”—
(Ancient Edict.)

“And the burgomaster, the senators, the four guilds, and the commonalty of both towns, the inhabitants and successors, now and for ever, shall pledge themselves to enter into no treaty, nor take part in any matter save with the cognizance and authority of their rulers.”

When all this had been read, and the witnesses had bound themselves to the same with signature and seal, the final clause ran as follows :—

“In witness whereof, we of the two towns have unanimously, with understanding of its contents and of our own free will, affixed our seals ; and we of the corporations have affixed the seals of each and every corporation to this document, being our agreement and treaty with our gracious prince and ruler, the Mark-graf, the same being given in the fourteenth hundred and forty-second year of our Lord, on the Monday following the Sunday on which is held the holy fast of Reminiscere.”

As witnesses, who attached their seals to the above, were Herr Erich, Duke of Stettin and Pomerania ; Herr Albrecht, Prince of Anhalt ; Herr Nickel Tyrback, master of the Order of St. John in the Mark ; Herr Peter Klytz, provost of Brandenburg ; and Herr Steeger, the good provost of Berlin, who was now recovered ; then two Ritters, Hans von Waldow, and William Voss the marshal ; Heinze Kracht, his grace's secretary ;

Jurgen von Walenfels, his grace's chamberlain ; Otto von Schlieben the elder ; Matthias von Bredow the elder ; Heine Pfuël, and Otto von Schlieben the younger ; and many other notable personages.

After the reading, there was still deeper silence. Not a limb was moved, no one cried " Long live the Mark-graf !" They of the towns hung their heads ; the Lords and Ritters looked exceedingly grave ; the Mark-graf alone gazed around him calmly, as if reading what was written in each man's soul.

Thereupon, the chancellor read over the lists of senators, whom his highness himself had nominated for either town. They were names which hardly have appeared in this book before ; they were, therefore, we may suppose, quiet people, who had cared more for their own domestic interests than for public matters. Such as these are ever the choice of princes. As senators for Koeln, he nominated Hans Lange, Hans von Grymene, Jacob Ottens, Clawes Koelre, and Andrew Warbeken ; and as burgomaster, Jacob Tydecke, who was a smith. This was not slightly to the discomfiture of Mathis Blankenfelde ; but there came worse still.

And for Berlin, he nominated Bartholomew Pletze, Palme Schulten, Heinrich von Walsleben,

Matthew Arndes, Caspar Mewes, Hans Hadewig, Nickel Falkenberg, Hans Francke, and Jacob Heinze, most of them tradespeople. But what was the surprise of all when he named the burgomaster ; he was Herr Johannes Rathenow !

“ Kneel, Johannes !” said the Mark-graf ; they were in the chamber, every window standing open ; and as he knelt, the prince himself hung the golden chain about his neck. “ Rise once more as burgomaster, and serve thy master, who is over thee, as faithfully as thou hast served the towns !”

Who would believe it, did it not stand written in the chronicles, and also in the record above, existing to-day with all its seals. The Prince chose Johannes Rathenow burgomaster, and Johannes took the oath to the prince’s own person. Mathis Blankenfelde’s face became as yellow as a guinea.

Johannes was also invited to the prince’s table, nor did his countenance change on that account. It was very grave ; one could see that much was passing in his mind. But the trumpets blew ; and on their way to the Mark-graf’s house, the Prince turned to Johannes, and asked—“ But where, then, is our Henning Mollner ? He is a friend of yours.”

“ He is not my friend, your highness.”

“ He spoke well of you.”

“Pity that I cannot do the same of him.”

“You have a fair daughter, Johannes!”

“One that I will rather send into the nunnery at Spandow, than give to one who could betray his town.”

A momentary expression of surprise and also anger, crossed the Prince's brow, but he restrained himself: “Where is Henning, burgomaster?” he asked, sternly.

“As I hear, he has mounted his horse, and betaken him into exile; and he has done well.”

“How, well!”

“Because, had he not gone into exile, we should have sent him.”

“Johannes Rathenow!”

“Whom your highness has chosen burgomaster of the town of Berlin, and who has sworn in your princely hand to govern as far he can with honesty and rectitude—who, therefore, would have exiled Henning Mollner, for having opened the gates contrary to the will of the senate? God be my witness!”

“But your Prince and Mark-graf!”

“He can deal with me as I had dealt with Henning!”

The Mark-graf looked at him with open eyes, and rocked his head for a time to and fro. And when he spoke it was as if nothing had happened.

“Come, Johannes, our dinner awaits us. But as for Henning, send him from the town, if you like; into exile he shall not go, unless to be with me is to be in exile.”

When all were gone out and the council-chamber was empty, the clerk of the senate took down the great towns' book, opened it, folded his hands, and sighed deeply. Then he dipped his pen into the inkstand and wrote, though it was bitter work for him: “And thus, though only so lately as the year 1432, on the Sunday after Visitationis, the affairs of the two towns were settled; yet now, in 1442, this good agreement, owing to divisions which have arisen in singular ways between the senate and the commonalty of both towns, between the four guilds and other bodies of tradesfolk, also by the machinations of sundry evil-disposed persons, is, God's pity, again disturbed and destroyed, so that in either town, every year, a new and especial senate must be chosen. God grant that it may soon be otherwise!”

END OF VOL. II.

